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**KOREAN TELEVISION DRAMA IN MALAYSIA:
AN ANALYSIS ON KOREAN MEDIA STRATEGY**

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Abstrak

Drama TV bersiri Korea telah mencapai peringkat audiens yang meluas di Asia, termasuk audiens Malaysia. Peningkatan populariti kandungan program hiburan Korea di Asia telah mencetuskan budaya pop Korea dalam industri hiburan. Kelihatan jurang yang agak nyata dalam kajian-kajian terdahulu, berkaitan strategi media Korea di dalam mempromosi drama-drama Korea. Kajian ini berusaha untuk memahami strategi media Korea untuk terus mendapat perhatian dan mengekalkan populariti drama Korea di Malaysia. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka strategi yang digunakan oleh media penyiar Korea bagi menarik penonton-penonton Malaysia di samping mempromosi drama televisyen Korea di Malaysia. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif untuk meneliti fenomena drama Korea. Empat (4) peserta daripada Penyiar Korea telah dikenal pasti dan terpilih untuk terlibat di dalam temubual mendalam, iaitu dua (2) daripada Seoul Broadcasting System dan dua (2) daripada Korea Broadcasting System. Berdasarkan kajian, ia menunjukkan media penyiaran Korea tidak mempunyai strategi sebenar. Pengalaman berkaitan kepayahan mereka untuk hidup, ekonomi dalam negara yang miskin, dan cabaran dari negara-negara maju lain telah membuatkan mereka bersaing dan bekerja secara kreatif untuk memperbaiki hidup mereka. Media Korea telah berjaya mengisi elemen-elemen Asia dan sentimen kemanusiaan di dalam drama-drama mereka. Justeru, ia telah menarik ramai audiens Asia, termasuk Malaysia. Hasil kajian daripada tesis ini adalah signifikan untuk menjelaskan kejayaan drama-drama Korea di peringkat global. Kajian ini mengisi jurang di dalam penyelidikan Malaysia dan menyediakan garis panduan untuk penyiar-penyiar tempatan di dalam perancangan, tindakan, dan membentuk strategi untuk menarik pasaran antarabangsa; dan kemudiannya untuk melabur dan menerima program-program Malaysia. Kajian ini juga akan dapat membantu kerajaan Malaysia dalam menentukan masa depan perancangan kerja media Malaysia.

Kata Kunci: Drama TV Korea, Strategi, Industri hiburan, Budaya dan Populariti.

Abstract

Korean TV drama series have reached a wide range of Asian audiences, including Malaysian audiences. The rising popularity of Korean entertainment content in Asia has created Korean pop culture in the entertainment industry. There seemed to be a gap in previous research concerning the strategy of Korean media in promoting Korean dramas. This research is an attempt to understand the Korean media strategy to continuously getting the attention and maintaining the popularity of Korean drama in Malaysia. The purpose of this study is to explore the strategies employed by Korean media broadcasters in attracting Malaysian audiences as well as promoting Korean television dramas in Malaysia. This research uses qualitative methods to address the Korean drama phenomenon. Four (4) participants from selected Korean Broadcasters were identified to participate in the in-depth interviews; two (2) from Seoul Broadcasting System and two (2) Korean Broadcasting System. Based on the findings, it shows that the Korean Broadcasting Media are not born to the real strategy. The experience of hardship to survive, economically poor country, and challenges from other developed countries has made them compete and creatively work to improve their lives. Korean media has successfully filled the Asian elements and human sentiments in their dramas. Therefore, it has attracted many Asian audiences including Malaysia. The findings of this thesis are significant in explaining the global success of Korean dramas. The study fills the gap in Malaysian research and provides guidelines for local broadcasters in their planning, action, and strategizing to attract international markets, and subsequently, for these markets to invest and accept Malaysian local programs. The results will also be able to help the Malaysian government in determining the future Malaysian media working plan.

Key words: Korean TV drama, Strategy, Entertainment industry, Culture and Popularity

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

The 'Korean Wave' or also known as Hanryu or Hallyu reflects the growing popularity of various aspects of Korean entertainment and culture in Asia. Besides creating a boom in the Asian entertainment industry, this trend is likened to a cultural tsunami that has overtaken the entertainment industry throughout East Asia. Specifically, Hanryu involves a craze for all things Korean, particularly movies, music, online games, hip-hop clothes, hairstyles and cosmetics (Dator and Seo (2004), Endo and Matsumoto (2004), Seo (2005), Hanaki et al. (2007).

Kim and Ryoo (2007) noted "Hallyu (or the Korean Wave) and other cultural trends from Asia have gained popularity in the region since they represent something that is closer to home without racial or ethnic stigmatizing of their race and ethnic groups often found in cultural products from the West. The yearning to belong and to become a part of the mainstream drives the popularity of Hallyu in Asia. Though there may be different forms of suffering and exploitation in Hallyu dramas and movies, but they are different from what we see in Hollywood movies, which tend to parallel discrimination based on race and ethnicities present in the US" (Kim and Ryoo, 2007, pg. 134).

The globalization of Korea through the acceptance of its culture in Asia was achieved rapidly. Subsequently, its popularity spread to various European countries and also, worldwide. In particular, interest in Korean television dramas, songs and

movies escalated rapidly across North and Southeast Asia, specifically in Japan, China, Mongolia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and Thailand.

Lee (2004), Cho (2005), Tunstall (2008) and Ju (2010) observed that the favored media genre in Korea was the TV drama series which differs greatly from the U.S and Western TV soap operas in terms of directing styles, formats, and narratives (Ju, 2010). Since wider Asian audiences, including the Japanese audience, have become captivated by these Korean TV series (Tunstall, 2008; Ju, 2010), the Asian mediascape (visual cultural or visual imaginary impact) is no longer dominated by American TV programs and films. Similarly, Korean music and dramas are fast gaining popularity in Malaysia as Malaysian broadcasting stations have started to introduce and include Korean music and dramas into their programmes. With hindsight, the interest in Korean drama TV series began as early as 2002 when the highly acclaimed romantic drama "Winter Sonata" was aired. Subsequently, several other dramas also became local Malaysian favourites, specifically "Deajanggum, Boys Over Flowers", "Full House" and "City Hunter".

1.1 Problem Statements

Malaysia is unique because of its diverse racial composition, its British colonial history and its melting pot of cultures. The main ethnic groups comprise the Malays, being the largest in number, followed by the Chinese, Indians and others. Due to its colonial past, Malaysia was largely exposed to the western media but in recent years, a new phenomenon emerged with the growing popularity of Korean dramas aired by Malaysian television networks such as TV2, TV3, NTV7, Channel 8, and Astro

(channel 391 and 393). The internet also provides many Korean readily available entertainment sites for interested viewers.

Kim (2007) observed that the rapid rise of the Korean Wave in Malaysia has left scholars in a state of shock and perplexity, concluding that the Korean culture craze also evident in other Asian countries, has led researchers to seek better understanding of this sudden phenomenon. Hence, she suggested that the increased interest in Korean dramas also developed the younger generation's admiration for Korean culture, language and fashion. What would be very significant to examine is how a multiracial country like Malaysia, rich in its history and cultural heritage, would be easily influenced by the influx of Korean dramas although both countries do not share any significant history.

In addition, Malaysia is not the only country that has been influenced Korean pop culture but this includes others Asian countries as well. As Chua (2010) observed, the increased interest in Korean pop culture developed rapidly in East and Southeast Asia, so that Korean films and Korean television dramas have become the television viewer's or movie goer's staple diet. This is compounded by the airing they receive in television stations and also in the marketing of Korean drama DVDs.

Lee (2004), Cho (2005), Kim and Ryoo (2007), Tunstall (2008) and Ju (2010) also highlighted that even in Korea, such drama has become the preferred media genre amongst most television viewers. Having said that, Kim (2009) noted that the popularity of Korean music and dramas has brought heated discussions around East and Southeast Asia since the end of 1990s. In fact, the popularity of Korean

entertainment has been perceived as an important catalyst of an East Asian popular culture (Kim, 2015). Previous studies on Korean dramas argued two major areas: the first argument is that the factor that has helped the success of Korean dramas is their less expensive market price. Kim (2007), Yeon (2008) and Ryo (2009) mentioned that apart from audiences' acceptance, beauty, good looks and celebrity culture, another main factor that has been able to attract most people to buy Korean products is that they are comparatively cheaper than Japanese and Hong Kong dramas.

The second argument range from various cultural issues. According to Ching (2000), Hayashi and Lee (2007), Lee, (2008), Ju (2010) and Vu (2011) the similarities between Asian cultures in certain aspects (respect for elders, strong family relationships, love and sexual modesty); has been able to attract Asian audiences to watch Korean dramas. There are also other factors that are discussed as noted by Vu (2011) including cultural proximity, modern consumerism. Concerted efforts involving politics and economics have also contributed to the success of Korean dramas.

Related to all the arguments above, there seemed to be a gap in previous researches concerning the role of the media in promoting and marketing the dramas. The influence of media strategy has not been discussed or even mentioned in their respective research or findings.

As the focus on popular Korean music and dramas began as early as the end of the 1990s in East and Southeast Asia (Kim, 2009), it emphasizes the need for Malaysia to study and adapt these Korean practices and include it as an exemplary model. The

absence of studies on media strategy in the Korean dramas success, suggested that there is a need for Malaysia to look into it as a basis to enhance its dramas from different perspectives.

Looking back at Malaysia, Salleh (2011) uncovered various factors that hinder Malaysia from being as accomplished as Korea. He observed the lack of technical knowledge and funds as the key obstacles in developing the Malaysian drama industry. In turn, this further led various other problems such as poor scripts and the lack of imagination in plots.

While these problems are acknowledged, and efforts by the Malaysian government has seen positive results, yet, their main priority is focused on developing the country as an attractive site for movies. Specifically, FINAS (National Film Development Corporation), is looking into formulating attractive policies and incentives to lure international producers to Malaysian locations (Rosnan & Aziz, 2012). However, the government's commitment in developing creative industries led to an allocation of RM200 million for this industry in the Malaysian 2010 budget, focusing on the development of films, dramas and animation production. Besides, in association with FINAS, the government is actively advancing the the creative industries' international efforts (Rosnan & Aziz, 2012).

To date, there is no indication of any progress in the field of creative industries as there has been no clear blueprint formulated for Malaysia to expand globally. What Malaysia needs is to maximise efforts and clear guidelines that will help to propel Malaysian dramas into international markets. Allocations, money or complaints

alone cannot lead to change or improve the industry if no clear strategies are to be implemented. Therefore, the factors that drive Korean dramas' success should be taken as lessons for Malaysia to understand and apply where necessary.

Studies suggest the strong influence of foreign cultures, especially in music and fashion, on Malaysian viewers (Jalaluddin & Ahmad, 2011). However, on the home front Malaysian television dramas are made to cater to specifically Malaysian audiences, without any strategies for producing dramas for the international market. To enable that level of production, studies need to be conducted on drama broadcast television, specifically on the importance and influence of media strategy. To date, no comprehensive study on media strategies is available to be used as a reference. Research on Malaysian drama have large at the focus on family values, religious beliefs and national integration (Md Ibrahim & Syed, 2012) as content as well as the audience's acceptance.

In general, drama research has not looked into media strategy, its application to the market, and its purpose in advertising and promotions. Research into this area is much lacking despite the government's efforts to utilize popular culture as a means of achieving its "nation-building and cultural objectives". (Md Syed & Hamzah, 2012). Also, these governments sponsored productions are not very popular as they lack the technical and creative edge. Thus, the Malaysian audience's interest lies largely with Western drama series. Again, none of these issues have been studied to facilitate and advance the local drama industry. Apart from that, it is also worth to study that Malaysian drama should also realize the significant of gaining and maintaining the popularity as the Korean government did to their creative industry.

Notably, these studies indicate the gap in media strategy from Malaysian drama viewpoint. Malaysian media has limited freedom to draw their own media strategy and to realize the role of media beyond the situation. Thus it makes sense for Malaysian drama enthusiast and researchers to look into the efforts and strategies employed by their Korean media counterparts in advancing Korean television dramas, particularly globally. There are significant lessons to be learnt and to emulate from the immense success of the Korean television dramas, which Malaysia must take advantage of.

Apart from that, this phenomenon also raises the issue of the impact of Korean drama penetration into the Malaysian market, thus also their influence on the minds of Malaysians. Illias (2011) who researched the impact of Western dramas on the audiences' minds found that most Malaysians viewed television, especially foreign dramas, solely for entertainment. Essentially, they obtained new ideas from these Western productions and were not easily accepting of any new ideas that contradicted with their core values, especially so if they touched their religious beliefs. They were more accepting of new ideas only if it brought betterment their lives. Indeed, many recognized the generally higher standards of living shown in western dramas but this did not influence them to want to move countries or adopt Western lifestyles (Illias, 2011).

According to Sang (2010), although Korean television drama has been popular in Asia, it was not something that was initially planned by the Korean government. Sang noted that historically, the South Korean government has invested in the development of popular culture, but the Korean Wave was an unplanned

phenomenon and the government had no intention to maintain it. Jin (2018) stated that in the early stage, the Korean Wave were mainly accepted in Asia but later extended outside Asia. It starts with some Korean TV dramas, like *What's Love All About?* (1997), *Winter Sonata* (2002), and *Dae Jang Geum* (2003). Also, the Korean entertainment industry was focusing on profits, rather than trying to provide an upgraded version of its products. For many critical reasons, the Wave faced a sudden decline. However, recognizing the potential of television drama in the Asian region, the Korean government began to take progressive steps. From then on, Sang (2010) explained further that the South Korean government has recognised the importance of maintaining and reinitiating the Korean Wave all over Asia, as well as the importance of spreading its popularity to places where it is yet unknown. The reinitiating of the Wave no longer focused merely on economic benefits but is reflected in their long-term policy, in the belief that it would play a vital role in enhancing South Korea's national brand. However, there is no clear statement of how the Korean government will plan or execute it in order to maintain and gain popularity in the future. Previous studies have also not indicated the media strategies that have been used by Koreans to maintain their newly established name on the international front.

The popularity of the Korean dramas in East and Southeast Asia with their own culture and approach has clearly shown the need for other countries, especially Malaysia to study and better understand how the Koreans managed to penetrate international markets and at the same time be able to maintain their culture. It also seems to suggest that the Korean media must play an important role to make it a success. Looking at the above arguments, the most significant gap is the lack of local

and global studies on Korean drama. This study is not only significant but timely as local and global research would provide Malaysia with lessons to formulate our own strategy in promoting our television dramas as achieved by the Koreans.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the identified research gaps, the following research questions are:

- 1.2.1 How do Korean dramas attract the Malaysian audiences?
- 1.2.2 What are the strategies adopted by Korean media broadcasters in promoting Korean television dramas?
- 1.2.3 What are the Korean media strategies to gain and sustain the popularity of Korean television dramas in Malaysia?

1.3 Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve specific objectives, as follows:

- 1.3.1 To explore Korean drama in attracting Malaysian audiences.
- 1.3.2. To investigate the strategies of Korean media broadcasters in promoting Korean dramas.
- 1.3.3 To understand the Korean media strategies used to gain and sustain the popularity of Korean's drama in Malaysia.

The advancements made in the Korean drama industry and its international popularity can serve as inspiration and provide valuable lessons for the Malaysian drama industry so that it may also emulate the Korean's glorious success. Their strategies should be studied so that Malaysian producers can also produce drama that fulfills international expectations.

1.4 Significance of Study

The Korean Wave, spread through the media and achieving international success, alerted various scholars who saw the need and realised the value of studying the phenomenon. Likewise, in the Malaysian context, such a study aims to uncover how the Malaysian media, specifically the television drama industry can gain valuable knowledge so as to formulate similar strategies to achieve international success like their Korean counterparts. This study fills a knowledge gap amongst practitioners in Malaysian media who need to better plan and produce scripts that cater to varying Asian tastes, so that neighbourhood broadcasting networks will subsequently accept and purchase Malaysian programs. The findings will also serve the Malaysian government in its future planning for the Malaysian media especially to better understand audience satisfaction in order to gain wider acceptance from international audiences. At the same time, Malaysian television drama producers could also learn and apply the strategy to promote their dramas abroad. Furthermore, the study will also show that the theory of cultural proximity has its significance role in media preferences that eventually would be accepted by other cultures. The findings of this study will be useful for academics, and specifically contribute to media and drama distribution studies with regard to media strategies; in terms of audience acceptance, demand and satisfaction besides looking at the potential of industry linkages.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study covers the media strategies employed by the South Koreans to facilitate Korean drama success. It focuses on selected Korean television broadcasting companies (Seoul Broadcasting System and Korean Broadcasting System). The aim is to focus on understanding the strategies of Korean media behind

their success. This study will also look into the media organisations' strategies and coverage since 2000.

1.6 Outline of the study

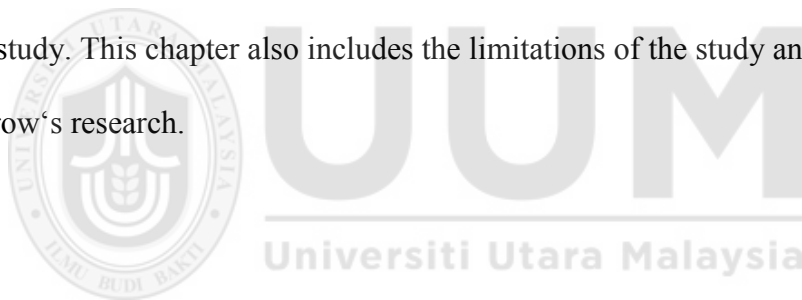
This study comprises six chapters. Chapter one presents the introduction, the problem statement and research objectives, its relevance and significance. Chapter two reviews the development of Korean television dramas besides looking at relevant theoretical arguments, and describes the related concepts. Korean television dramas are deployed as the methodological basis for assessing the Korean wave, and the spread of Korean media Asia-wide. Major theory in this field - Cultural Proximity - is analysed and reviewed. The theory concepts present significant validation in analysing the Korean media broadcasters' methods, especially in explaining the unprecedented popularity of Korean television dramas.

Chapter three reviews Korean history, the Korean economy as well as the Korean government. In addition, this chapter will present the success of Korean dramas in foreign countries and also look at Korean drama audiences.

Chapter four describes the methodology employed in this study. The primary method involves interviews with Four Korean television station officers, and the specific interview protocols, participants and procedures are also further explained. Besides the in-depth interviews, the texts of Korean dramas are analysed to assess how far the meaning resonates with the participants.

Chapter five contain an analysis of the Korean media broadcaster in doing strategies, promoting, and gain as well as maintaining the popularity of Korean drama. The participants interviewed are interpreted and analysed. This chapter discovers the efforts made by Korean media broadcasters behind the success of Korean dramas in Malaysia, especially in attracting viewers in Malaysia. Besides, the chapter also explores the effective strategies used by the Korean media in order to achieve successes. This discussion will be further augmented by the views of and validation from the Malaysian participants, who provide their insights on the current developments and implications of the Wave in Malaysia.

Finally, chapter six provides a summary of the practical and theoretical implications of the study. This chapter also includes the limitations of the study and directions for tomorrow's research.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

TV drama series have gained great popularity amongst Korean television viewers, making it the most popular media genre in the country (Cho, 2005; Lee, 2004). The flow of Korean media content into Asian homes means that the Asian Media scape, once dominated by American programs, is also changing. Korean TV drama series which vary greatly from American or Western TV soap operas and programs, have now reached a wider range of Asian audiences including the Japanese (Tunstall, 2008). As such, Korean programs have become a much loved regional media form.

The era of globalization has impacted the popularity of Korean dramas, and created great interest amongst television viewers, movie go-ers, producers, and the general public. Also, the Korean Wave has stretched into international markets, so that even academics are compelled to research the phenomenon. The interest in this phenomenon can be classified into two types.

Firstly, research on Korean drama focuses on the commercial side, i.e. the market and pricing of these dramas. Kim (2007) suggested that for most Asian nations, compressed industrialization whereby rapid modernization impacted traditional values and beliefs, these Korean dramas brought a sense of nostalgic relief. This can be exemplified by the huge popularity of dramas such as 'Winter Sonata' throughout Asia. In his paper, he focused on showing how such dramas surrounded with modern exterior and traditional settings are able to lessen the effects of ultra-modern lives among the Seoulites. Plus, Yeon (2008) highlighted that the Korean Waves has

been excellently launched from the beginning as the effect shown by it popular music, dramas and movies. This factor greatly enabled Asian production companies to purchase Korean products at the beginning of the Korean Wave. For example, in 2000, the price of Korean television dramas cost a quarter less than Japanese ones, and a tenth less of Hong Kong television dramas. Worldwide economic trends, such as the Asian economic crisis, also meant that Asian buyers were looking for cheaper alternatives to Japanese products. As mentioned by others, Yeon also observed the impact of popular Korean dramas in Malaysia on the younger generation who started highly appreciating Korean culture, language and fashion.

Yet, other scholars believe that the cheaper price factor does not necessarily or adequately ensure the success of Korean dramas. Other factors such as the good looks and attractiveness of Korean movie and television actors and actresses, and the increasing exposure to Korean values that resonate with other Asian countries played a vital role in the upsurge of Korean dramas. (Ryoo, 2009). As such, various Asian television companies started syndicating the comparably cheaper and impressive-looking Korean shows.

The second type of research assesses the cultural aspects of the Korean wave. Ching (2000) highlighted it is vital to have deep understanding of its specific traits as well as to identify competing and related industrial developments within and beyond the region. Specifically, Ching describes the wave as "a transnational form of cultural production and consumption very different from cultural forms heretofore associated with nation states."

Moreover, Ju (2010) introduced the concept of media commodification as a huge factor that accelerated the spread of Korean pop culture throughout Asia. The huge demand for Korean media products abroad was propelled also by a national support commercial drive in Korea. This enabled Korea to reach into wider and further outlets for its cultural products (Ju, 2010). In Asia, the Korean wave is seen as a celebrated national triumph that has impacted greatly on the region. Thus, it has led practitioners and researchers to actively rethink the value and underpinnings of Korean Wave.

Vu (2011) in his article of *'Soap Operas as a Matchmaker: A Cultivation Analysis of the Effects of South Korean TV Dramas on Vietnamese Women's Marital Intentions'*, observed the various factors that contributed to the success and appeal of Korean dramas.

Firstly, cultural proximity, or what may be described as a shared or common ground between Korea and other East Asian societies, in terms of values and lifestyles serves as one of the strongest reasons for the viewers' interest and love for Korean dramas.

Next, the plots involving romantic love and highly emotive stories, which are often relayed from a woman's perspective, has also managed to capture the imagination of huge audiences in East Asia.

Modern consumerism is the third characteristic of South Korea dramas. According to Vu (2011) quoted from Yang (2008), these dramas had a commercial slant where the main actors or idols in the dramas are marketed as business packages with "idol-

related commodities". Cashing on this, Korean dramas thus make it a point to employ good-looking men and beautiful women, with immaculate dressing to attract viewers and potential buyers of drama related merchandise.

Finally, besides content and technology advancements, the success of Korean dramas has also been affected through continuous and serious efforts involving politics and economics.

According to past studies, this research attempts to discover not only from the aspect of media contents and cultural perspectives but also the strategy approaches deployed by the Korean media. Prior research has not highlighted the media strategies employed by the South Korean productions that have attracted massive Asian audiences, specifically in Malaysia. The strategies employed are of significant in assessing the virtues of Korean media in penetrating international markets.

A scarce in the empirical studies conducted on the successful stories of Korean media in Malaysia, especially drama series, has created many questions. The major question arises in determining the key features that have led Korean dramas to capture the imagination of a vast foreign audience. Lessons from this can be used specifically for the Malaysian drama industry to emulate with the aim of achieving similar success.

2.1 Korean Wave

Called as “hallyu” in Korean, the Korean wave focuses on the skyrocketing increase in the visibility of Korean culture around the globe. Started in East Asia in the 1990s,

the wave has recently reached the United States of America, Latin America, the Middle East and some parts in Europe (Ravina, 2008). The Korean wave has managed to demolish the US dominance of the global entertainment industry, specifically due to the unique cultural and aesthetic styles of the Koreans. Its advance into the United States, India and Brazil for example has ensured more cultural diversity in the global media landscape (Cho, 2005; Shim, 2006; Nam, 2013a).

At the same time, the Korean pop culture wave highlight on the rise of its culture in Asian countries through its well-known dramas, dances, films, music animations as well as games involving fan clubs which generally have been taken up by media around the globe. Nevertheless, it is claimed that the Korean Wave was started in the 1990s through its television dramas. According to Mee (2005), the first reports of "Korean Wave" came in 1999 and ever since, its popularity has reached China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Hong Kong, and other Asian countries. The unprecedented phenomenon created attention and stirred excitement in Korea's cultural industry as well as the government and academia (Mee, 2005).

As stated by Heo (2002), the Korean television drama "What is Love All About?" initially hit big time once it was aired on national China Central Television Station (CCTV) in 1997. When it was re-aired by CCTV in 1998 in a prime-time slot due to huge demand, it recorded the second-highest ratings ever in the history of Chinese television. In Japan, "Winter Sonata" became a popular Korean drama when it was first aired and eventually spread to the other Asian neighbour countries such as China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong (Jang & Paik, 2012).

Another serial that became a huge success in 1999 was ‘*Stars in My Heart*’, which first hit China and Taiwan. Following this, the domination of Korean television dramas strongly took place in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore as well as Vietnam. These productions even hit Indonesia, which experienced media liberalization in the 1990s (Heo, 2002).

Following that, Korean popular culture successfully penetration into neighbouring Asian countries began to remarkably increase over the past several years. It also moved to diverse parts of Asia in 2000 through 2002, including Southeast and Central Asia (Hyejung, 2007; Lee, 2011). In the 2000s, the presence of the Internet and social media has influenced the popularity of the Korean Wave (Jang & Paik, 2012) which was initiated with television dramas and young idol groups including K-pop, movies and several cultural aspects.

However, there were also studies which believe the successes of Korean drama to the other neighbour countries are due to the economic crisis that swept the world. Lee (2003) suggested that the cheaper range of Korean programs created a huge demand specifically because of the economic crisis that hit Asia as they were considerably more affordable compared products by the Japanese (by one quarter of the price) and Hong Kong (by one tenth of the price). This assertion is supported by Shim (2006) who added highlighted the financial worth of Korean television exports that increased dramatically in 2003 and was valued at Korean at \$37.5 million, compared to \$12.7 million in 1999.

From another angle of the Korean wave, it actually gave a further impact. According to Lee (2001), Korea is believed to be one of the significant histories of the 20th century where the presence of Korean Wave has somehow shaped the global perception and image of South Korea. As it only started as a cultural presence in a specific region, the Korean Wave has now penetrated the whole Asia and Lee claims that its deep-rooted ancient heritage and cultural practice have influenced Korea in being a prosperous, democratic and liberal nation.

This is also recognized and emphasized by Mee (2005) in his study on "Korean TV Dramas in Taiwan: With an Emphasis on the Localization Process" had once noted before that the emergence of Korean pop culture in Asia has shaped a positive definition in a postcolonial Asian country. Mee believes that prior to the wave, most Asians did not have any contact with other Asian cultural products and the commonly held view was that Asian countries are culturally and economically substandard compared to the Western world. Thus their perceptions held before the wave started, stems from a rather unrealistic view of Asian countries (Mee, 2005).

The effects of the cultural phenomenon not only permeated popular culture though the size of a positive lifestyle for many Asians. Like Mee (2005), Lee (2007) argued that many Asians often held stereotypical things about South Korea that were mostly seemed to be unpleasant and related to the Korean War, famine and political unrest (Lee, 2007). Nevertheless, the presence of cultural explosion has removed all those spiteful perceptions as a result of fashionable entertainers and advancement of technology development (Lee, 2011).

Things changed when the cultural wave alongside the media and commercial nationalism represented an extraordinary sight of Korean famous culture (Hyejung, 2007). Due to this, the cultural wave is established as a sign of Korea's regional cultural trend (Lee, 2011).

Looking at the strength of the Korean drama that so widely accepted and popular in Asian, Ryoo (2007) said, there are some elements in Korean drama which rarely highlighted in western drama. To that statement, Ryoo found out that, these television shows and movies portray themes that are more relatable for Asian audiences than those of Western productions. He mentioned the specialism of Korean "dramas typically deal with family issues, love and filial piety in an age of changing technology, and often rein-forces traditional values of Confucianism" (Lee, 2011).

Adding to that, Kim and Kim (2011) also highlighted the impact of Korean media products in various Asian countries and how it has extended beyond Asia, throughout the world. At this point, Jang and Paik (2012) stressed "Hallyu" as an exceptional global media and pop culture phenomenon that has also advanced the global media market and diversified global media studies.

Despite the huge achievements of the Korean wave, the Korean government has played a definitive role. It is said that the government has leveraged on the nation's Wave and turned it into a tool to advance the country's cultural and public diplomacy. Jang and Paik (2012) state that Lee's presidency has put a "complex diplomacy" and "value diplomacy" as a focus in improving the image and brand of

the country. To be specific, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Presidential Council on Nation Branding have taken the chance of Korean Wave's reputation to promote the country's national interest in order to improve its image internationally (Jang & Paik, 2012).

However, the Korean wave debates cannot be confined to those limits, even though the effects of the wave has reverberated throughout the world. Therefore, some researchers had raised a number of opinions and views towards the issues.

First, the Wave cannot be termed as a typical "Korean" wave phenomenon; but should be seen as a hybrid of traditional Korean culture and western cultures, particularly American. Shim (2006) asserts that cultural hybridization is effected through the interactions and negotiations made by local cultural agents and actors interact with global channels. These are used as resources through which Koreans construct their own cultural spaces. It is suggested that the Wave should be more accurately known as the Korean-hybrid wave. This is even more relevant as Korean pop culture has managed to arrest the attention of the people through a clever mix between the alluring images of Westernized modernity with Asian sentimentality. This clever blend of visual attributes and emotions forms the base of the said Wave. Korea had been seen taking advantages from foreign cultures, which in turn making into their own, and further more they produced an advanced culture all its own (Jang & Paik, 2012). Thus, by the end of 2002, the Korean wave was beyond popular Korean culture and had translated into a new cultural and economic power. Due to media liberalization and growth in the 1990s, Korean media emerged as a result of international domination of culture (Chuang & Lee, 2013).

Adding to that, You (2006; p. 4) observed that "This, in fact, is the very strength of Korean culture. Having accommodated foreign culture for a long period of time, we have acquired great historical experience of refining imported culture into our own." Furthermore, Korean scholars credit cultural hybridity as an act that promotes both globalization and localization of Korean popular culture both globally and locally. According to Jang and Paik (2012), the 1990's has seen the globalization of the Korean culture.

Second, alluding to the idea that the world is not flat according to Florida's view, the Korean Wave has resulted in different impacts at cross-national levels, in the different societies and countries. As observed by Huang (2011), hybridization occurred in Taiwan with the combination of the Japanese and Korean cultures, rather than cultural homogenization or cultural autonomy. The effects of in Malaysia include the more pronounced interest in Korean society and culture, language and lifestyles, besides enhancing the images of Korea (Cho, 2010). As Cai (2011) noted, cited in Jang and Paik (2012; p.201), "After the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Korea in 1992, the relationship between the two countries developed quickly. The two countries share common ground on some important regional issues, such as the North Korean nuclear crisis. They base this diplomatic consensus on their own interests. Because they share the common experience of Japanese invasion, they remain wary of Japan. In addition, Korea is gradually distancing itself from the United States and is increasingly moving close to China, which makes Chinese people more comfortable with Korean culture".

Third, Japan, China, and Taiwan for example has witnessed "anti-Korean Wave" movements and slogans, indicating the impact of the wave and also a non-reciprocal, reluctant and uneasy attitude towards cross-cultural exchanges (Lee, 2009). Cai (2011) noted that "China's State Administration for Radio Film and Television also said in December 2005 that China had been too generous with the import of Korean TV dramas and called for a stricter screening process. It also said China should limit airtime for Korean dramas to 50 percent. Soon here after, China Central Television said it would gradually reduce the amount of time allotted to soap operas from Korea. Beijing TV said it was pondering a similar move and could start showing more Hong Kong and Taiwan-made soap operas" (Jang & Paik, 2012; p.102).

The negative impact resulting from the sweeping Korean tidal wave was seen in counter-arguments and hostile attitudes that were obvious in news coverage. The negative backlash in specific Asian countries gradually made these countries reluctant to spread the Korean wave in their country. Japanese news articles were vocal in their hostility on Korea-related issues, whilst the Chinese media condemned the build-up of Korean dramas and Korean companies in the Chinese market (Lee, 2011).

Consequently, according to Lee (2011), in January 2006, China's State Administration of Radio, Film and Television authorized the reduction of Korean dramas by half. This incident also happened later in Taiwan, which was reported to be considering a ban on foreign dramas due to the massive popularity of Korean dramas (Lee, 2007). According to Wan (2006), the South Korean government aimed at using the wave as a tool to represent the Asian culture globally, rather than just

branding the Korean image. In this case Lee (2011) argued that the adoption of this stand resulted from a recognition of the huge impact of Korean culture not only on its nation, but also across the entire region.

The wave's marked effects in various countries included a shift in local attitudes towards Korea. If these attitudes were unfavourable in the past, the wave was instrumental in positively transforming Korea's image. Ultimately, the enhancement of Korea's image had a ripple effect that reached further than its economy or peninsula. Such dramatic changes beg questions of the media particularly how the transformation was addressed by the media (Lee, 2011).

In the meantime, Chua (2010) highlighted that the government of Korea was being supportive in determining the victory of the Korean Wave which could be seen in its continuous support of its entertainment and culture industry. According to Schwab (2013), this stand by the government was a wise move as it boosted the economy of Korea, turning it into among the best fifteen largest-economies in the world in 2012 with a GDP worth US\$1,155.9 bil. South Korea's almost magical transformation has been dubbed as 'The Miracle of the Han River' by many of its underdeveloped neighbours (H'ng & Yazdanifard, 2014).

Speaking of the success of Korean wave, the question arises how far the understanding of neighbouring countries in Asia regarding this phenomenon Korean wave. According to Ko (2005), we need a theory not bound by national borders in order to understand the Korean wave phenomenon. Neighbouring countries, such as Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam, understand Korean wave from their own social realities

(Hanaki, Singhal, Han, Kim, & Chitnis, 2007; Jung, 2009; Kim, 2009). However, further highlighting the need for a more understanding on media in terms of the roles of the media in promoting the Korean wave. Previous researchers have yet to focus on the strategic media involvement to the successful of Korean wave phenomenon.

2.2 Media Strategy

Media strategy can be described as a game plan enacted by an organization to achieve the desired goal and deployed through a specific medium to effectively reach the audience. Prior research on the Korean wave attempted to uncover such strategies and were focussed on Korean media acceptances, the media tendency and media promotion.

Iwabuchi (2010) highlighted how East Asia had undergone an unprecedented acceptance of other media cultures which meant that the people and media industries from these different nations were now building new connections within the region. This development resulted in the decrease of popular American media cultures in the region despite it still remaining popular in other regions. Even the penetration of American media is still on the dominant's side, it has shown some decrease which is mainly contributed by the advancement of local media that are more acceptable in nature. In addition, the emergence of media policies by governments around East Asia has somehow influenced the growth of Western cultures besides promoting the domestic media culture in the late 1990s (Wang, 1996), also reflected the ascendancy of local media cultures.

Building on this argument, Huat (2010) suggested that media texts are mere objects which are open to different conceptual interpretations by different audiences, thus the effects of the Korean Wave is also much determined by how the culture is perceived by audiences in varying locations. It translates into how these audiences perceive their own associations with these foreign media texts rather how Korean culture has influenced the various regional audiences. The good reception by Asian audiences according to Shim (2006), with reference to Song (2002) can be explained by the similarities in lifestyles and cultural proximity, thus fulfilling Asian emotional needs.

The Asian media industry seems also keen to create their own Asian 'Hollywood'. Iwabuchi (2010) and Newsweek Asia (2001) are of the view that collaborations and partnerships are usually formed once media industries engage in international marketing and span transnational markets. Thus the idea of 'Asiawood' emerges, with Inter-Asian promotion and co-production of media cultures as a direct result of the said industry collaborations within the region.

Yeon (2008) outlined several developments that made it opportune for Korean popular culture to penetrate various Asian markets. Amongst others he cited the inclusion of sentiments related to Confucianism into music videos and soap operas, technological advancements superior visual images, dynamic movements of Korean producers as well as the display of South Korea in television dramas. All these, coupled with the sudden economic drop of Asian companies meant that the Asian markets were ready for newer Asian products, including Korean ones.

Combining different media types helped to launch the Korean wave as a successful industry. As was observed by Ryoo (2009), the arrival of cable television and satellites created a powerful technological platform which could accommodate multi-channel broadcasting. When South Korean music, television drama and cinema began flourishing in the Asian market, it was combined with the technological advancements mentioned to create the cultural phenomenon which entails in-depth analyses on the international environment and the demands of media contents (Ryoo, 2009).

Prior research by Ju (2010) that Asian media industry highlighted on discovering the presence of global-local immersion related to international market share of media hence intra-Asian media flow will not regard as important as the academic or industrial analysis. The presence of irregular intra-Asian media flow influences not only the local-on-local trade but also its cultural reproduction within the regional industry of media (Iwabuchi, 2005; Ju, 2010). The mixing of Korean media with other regional styles, systems and services complicates the culture in East Asia towards a shared media market (Ju, 2010).

Ju (2010) in her interview surveys, discovered the need for Korean programs to have appropriate local content for them to be successfully marketed in Asian countries. They had to address the specific social or psychological sensitivities of Eastern audiences. She asserted,

—Firstly, for the promotional purpose of historical Korean dramas, in-depth reviews with regards to its historical facts, usefulness and importance towards the local history need to be thoroughly conducted. Secondly, it also enhances more reviews on post-

programming with regard to dramas that are exported which contain numerous stages of repacking in order to suit the standard of local media‘

In summary, the media strategy adopted by the Korean media has shown a success and achieved the desired outcome. The popularity of the Korean wave, especially the Korean dramas locally and abroad has proven that it is very significant to have an effective media strategy. Thus, the following topic would be discussing the Korean media industry.

2.2.1 Korean Media Industry

Although Korea is not considered as an established powerhouse of popular culture in Asia, it is fast growing into a ‘sub-Empire‘ (Chen, 2000), and benefiting from the historic media liberalization in Asia that began in the 1990s (Shim, 2006). It is suggested that the advancement of the Korean media industries into regional markets can be seen as resistance from the lower classes and is clearly a sign of revolt against the upper classes in light of the domination of global cultural industries by the American media industry (Shim, 2006).

The new liberalization policy marked a historic chapter in the development of the media in Korea starting from the late 1980s. The Korean authorities did not allow any foreign companies access to the country’s movie industry and it was only in 1988 that Hollywood studios were permitted to disseminate international movies throughout the country. Before this, only local companies had the rights to do so. Due to this development many local film importers had to close-down, and even the number of locally produced movies fell from 121 in 1991 to 63 in the year of 1994.

By the year of 1994, more than 10 Korean film importers had closed down their organizations. The local film industry in general, suffered from opening its doors to the American giants and Hollywood had a bigger grip on the local market share of up to 80% as compared to 53% in 1987 (Shin, 1995; Yi, 1994).

Against this backdrop, in 1994, there was an awakening government report sent by the Presidential Advisory Board on Science and Technology to the President where it suggested the government to promote media production taken from the Hollywood blockbuster, Jurassic Park's overall revenue from theatre exhibitions, television syndications, licensing etc. as a national strategic industry. As a consequence of comparing a film with the country's pride which was the Hyundai cars, the Koreans became more aware of the industrialization of culture. This somehow became a hotly-debated topic for years, aligned with the globalization-cum-information age discourse. As a result of the report, the government of Korea formed the Cultural Industry Bureau under the Ministry of Culture and Sports in 1994 as well as instituting the Motion Picture Promotion Law in 1995 as a way to gain corporate and investment boons for the benefits of its local film industry (Shim, 2006).

In order to form a cultural industry, American's system of media was adapted into the Korean film industry with the tagline 'Learning from Hollywood' even though it was debated that they must market and commercialize more of their media organizations. Kim (2006) mentioned that the media policy report prepared for the Korean government in 1995 as "Korea has to promote vertical integration of media conglomerates, hence, there is a need to handle the large-scale TNCs by asking the media conglomerates to fit their size and resources" (Shim, 2006; pg 32).

In relation to this, the growing Korean family-owned and huge business organizations (known as chaebol) like Samsung, Hyundai and Daewoo, started to spread their wings to media industry including the process of producing, importing, distributing and exhibiting. Across this stage, the export-oriented continued to grow which can be seen by some examples including the action taken by Daewoo's group film division's manager who claimed that it was their job to promote and export Korean films internationally (Groves, 1997). According to Shim (2002), in the context of the increased public interest towards cultural provocation by Sopyonje, and conducive film viewing surroundings through investments and growing opportunity as well as choice movie theatre infrastructures easier, Korean cinema started to gain attention from local fans.

Shim (2006) suggested that the commercial slant of the Korean media caused several adverse effects. Over time, these companies were overcome by commercialism and profit maximization rather than devoting themselves to public service. Their main objective was to promote products and services to the maximum amount and this capitalist doing was endorsed in the name of the country's interest (Shim, 2006).

The Korean Wave was supported by specific fiscal techniques of marketing developed by the Korean media industry including: star marketing systems, partial copyright options, joint enterprising and collaboration arrangements (Ju, 2010).

2.2.2 The Star Marketing System

The star-marketing system involved employing top Korean stars so that the movies were more marketable. Ju (2010) noted that exported dramas such as

'TaeWangSaSinGi', 'Coffee Prince', 'Sorry and Love You', and 'IRIS' used this marketing system (Bae Yong-Joon in 'TaeWangSaSinGi', Gong Yu in 'Coffee Prince', So Ji-Sub in 'Sorry and Love You', and Lee Byun-Hun in 'IRIS') and were thus, costly. Yet, they proved to be highly valued and very efficient sources of marketing and advertising in the foreign media markets. The Korean stars were regarded as indicators of the financial potential of a drama by the foreign buyers. Although the success of the film is not guaranteed, star power is commonly used as a standard decision making too, hence initiating the path of media flow among markets.

The ethnicity of the actors plays a huge part in determining whether audiences like a particular movie or TV series in African, Asian, and Latin American audiences. Shared ethnic backgrounds usually translate into making the programs more popular (Havens, 2002). Such assumptions about background and ethnicity have long been practiced by the American authorities and influences how they distribute screen entertainment products and shows in a local culturally-different or alien setting. Likewise, the basis for promoting Korean dramas is also largely based on whether they feature actors or actresses that are idolised by local audiences.

Various strategies were used to promote local Korean productions in Asian markets, including holding public relations events featuring Korean stars, local fan meetings and star interviews as well as news conferences were shown on local TV before screening the first movie or serial. Kim (2005) suggested that such strategies can contribute to the success of international programmes nationally. Kuwahara (2014)

stated that this marketing system has helped to increase the volume of exports and improve the potential Korean entertainment products.

Therefore, the Korean media through their marketing approaches is also applied the star appeal of their actors and actresses to attract the audience's interest and demand. So, it is no surprise to see their actors and actresses is also involved in the promotion and publicity of their dramas and programs. In a way, as far as the marketing is concerned, they use the attractiveness, interest, demand and action to promote their programs.

2.2.3 Segmented Copyrights of the Korean Dramas

When Korean TV dramas are exported, they also sell off the Korean TV stations' copyrights to the buyer. Usually the copyrights belong wholly or partially to the TV stations and production companies, and terms and conditions of the sale are highlighted in the contract. Numerous copyrights are purchased by television companies, Korean network TV syndicators or independent production companies. Specifically, the contract will stipulate the types of copyrights sold as well as the legal aspects for airing and distributing the movies or TV serials.

These copyrights vary and are determined according to network facilities and their capability to disseminate video contents through various media means. The availability and types of social devices also play an influential role as they will determine consumer involvement in the content production and selection (Ju, 2010).

As the Korean drama has become popular, the importance of copyrights cannot be ignored due to the all related parties involved. The television stations, the production companies as well as the media contents need to follow the legal, procedures and rules so as of each party's rights is well protected.

2.2.4 Joint Ventures of Korean Drama Production

Joint venture programs can be advantageous if only the participating companies will take on certain risks (Gershon, 2000), in that they provide financial flexibility especially for those lacking funds. Specifically, joint venture programs can provide financial solutions especially when the production costs are above average and also in experimentation of new genre. However, funding arrangements are constrained by the Broadcasting Act of Korea which restricts foreign investments in Korean drama productions.

However, the legislation was changed in 2000 to facilitate financial supports coming from international media organizations and TV production corporations. As such, these joint ventures have benefited local TV stations and are increasingly regarded as a strategy in the pre-production stage of local dramas.

Joint ventures of Korean drama production have been seen as another way of not only the flexibility of financing options with different companies, it has also opened up another opportunity of making it into foreign countries through foreign investment.

2.2.5 Co-Production of Korean Drama Programming

Kraidy (2005) noted the advantages of joint productions as enabling production houses to share equipment, staff and experts in programming and production expertise and open-air shooting locations. In addition, joint productions also increase the chances for financing, government subsidies and tax breaks. Importantly, these productions also lessen the risks of a commercial failure especially for single companies. The joint productions usually involved establishing partnerships between Asian TV networks and local production firms, meaning they can share local programming groups, technical infrastructure and administrative assistance to be used by local filming requirements such as the local casts.

Joint productions in Korea are often successfully undertaken with regional TV networks and production companies. These joint productions within the industry will increase the capacity and variety of multicultural audiences that are present in a specified partner's domain (Kraidy, 2005).

As a result, the Korean media industry has managed to expand and develop into an international market quite easily with the foreign partner. The foreign partner participation has benefited the Korean media industry in a sense of funding, technology as well as international appeals.

2.2.6 Korean Media Content

Comprehensive reforms in Asian media in the late 1990s resulted in both the decentralization of local media industries and privatization of media ownership. Such reforms had a great effect on the subsequent media flow within the Asian countries.

In essence, it emphasized the significance of regional media exchanges of various media content and services in various forms (Chua, 2004; Cooper-Chen, 1999; Iwabuchi, 2002; Lee, D.H., 2004; Mikami, 1993; Nakano, 2002; Singhal & Udornpim, 1997; Ju, 2010). While Korean transnational content business was already successful in Asia, it is now globally significant in other continents such as South and North Americas and Europe.

Ju (2010) defined the Korean Wave as an interpretation of "glocalization" made by its media industry which refers to the mutual involvements of media production, distribution and consumption due to the merging of global and local elements. Hence, this situation involves adaptation, accommodation and innovation of a network comprising local-regional-global aspects. In terms of culture, glocalization implies the integration of two or more aspects coming from various culture, cultural preferences and famous trends in order to fit into numerous local or foreign audiences.

Glocalization can be manifested in two sides as it firstly entails adaptation of foreign elements locally by mixing it with home-grown and foreign contents. Secondly, it is acceptable by local that the foreign contents and gain international tendencies match their way of life, sensibilities and personalities. With regard to the advancements made by the Korean Wave since 1999, a chronological assessment illustrates its evolvement till today (Ju, 2014).

Additionally, the Korean TV stations began actively (Ju, 2014) looking for other commercial avenues to create new content and also for distributing and reproducing

the current content. As such, a new policy called the "New Millennium Vision" for the media industry was promoted in 2001 to encourage various governmental initiatives to grow the Korean cultural businesses abroad.

Ju (2010) highlighted the increased desire amongst Korean broadcasting companies to gain greater industry once the Korean Wave started. Korean broadcaster had predicted an increase in exports will be prolonged upon regional branches and also the wider global media content for them. As a result, broadcasters Korea created and emphasize commercial strategy focusing on Asia, especially the planning and programming of TV drama. Korean broadcasting companies concluded that these developments are timely, especially since the need for programming in Eastern Europe is conducive to the export success of Korean media content.

The initial stirrings of the Korean Wave began in 1997 with the broadcasting of the TV drama "What Is Love All About", on Chinese state television (CCTV). The drama attracted China's interest in the Korean television programs and music and eventually, a Korean pop music named H.O.T boy band succeed to grab Chinese audience where without any doubts, boy bands and dramas were the main elements that ignited the Korean Wave in Asia. In 2000, 'Sparks' was exported to Taiwan causing a hike in popularity of Korean dramas in that country (Ju, 2014).

Undoubtedly, the popularity of Korean media rests on popular star-marketing, causing an unprecedented Korean drama boom. At the same time, Korean television production companies began to highlight the dramas suited to Asian audiences. The selection of actors is essential to ensure that Korean drama is marketable overseas.

The popularity of Korean actors (like Hollywood stars) further enticed their fans to travel and visit the country (Ju, 2014).

Ju (2010) stated that Korean Wave is based on glocalized media offerings and industrial Korea, as evidenced from the commercialization and distribution of content that has been adapted-cording to the regional market. Korean media have also established cooperative programs and funding system, and the values of Asian inspiration in the customization of content. In short, in the case of the Korean wave, glocalization evidence can be seen in both the formation contents and conventions industry.

Ju (2010) also mentioned that the most popular Korean Wave content is Korean television drama and dance pop music of Korea. This genre has achieved much success in content creation because they reveal real accents, the Korean culture and the daily norms and values. Other local cultural accent on glocalization, including contents pop original Japanese as glocalization model, revealed a number of differences from the Korean Wave.

Iwabuchi (2002) had also cited glocalization based on Japan by saying that the media industry Japan has removed all indicators of 'Japan-ness' from all its productions that are to be distributed to international markets comprising of cartoons and animated films as well as dramas for television and comic books. In distributing media and cultural products throughout Asia, the main obstacle is the image of Japan as a-once-colonial power. To obliterate this historic issue, the local cultural industries have added product content with other cultural content that will appeal to all of Asia. This

includes state-of-the-art products, modern, pluralistic Japanese innovations and common worldview (Iwabuchi, 2002).

At first Korean drama content is more oriented to Japanese drama production. However, it gradually changed and has their own style. Korean TV drama producer and given a new lease of them has their own style, whether in terms of narrative or emotional touches (Lee, 2004).

Adding to that, Lee (2004) viewed in contrast to the content of Japanese dramas, Korean media content maintaining the social values, cultural meaning and media narrative in Korea itself. This implies that the Korean drama TV series exported not mimic Japan's previous program. At first, Korean TV dramas were made for a domestic audience, they argue that the play should be common sense and logic. But the emergence of Korean wave has been verifying the successful of Korean dramas in the local audience and also its success to attract Asian audiences watching and interested in Korean dramas. Local production companies usually regard home success as a predictor and vital a decision-making tool when considering their next moves into regional or international markets (Lee, 2004).

It could be said that most of the effort in the Korean drama production was worth in result. The uniqueness and differences of Korean media content has also driven the success of the Korean production compared with Asian countries such as Japan. In a way, the Korean drama production is strategically organized and executed to be popular and well recognized.

2.2.7 Promotional Activity

Ju (2010) stated that new Korean releases often indulged in promotional activities (or soon-to-be-released) including pre-planned promotional strategies featuring casts, premiere tours, scene stories, guidebooks as well as local fan meetings which undoubtedly came along with the successful Korean drama entitled 'Dae Jan Geum' in 2003.

In order to ignite the popularity of 'Dae Jang Geum', the drama was brought to more than 30 countries including Asian countries, Australia, Canada, Iran, Israel, Mexico, Russia and Romania. The drama which was broadcasted in Taiwan and Hong Kong between 2004 and 2005 has become the most famous program on GTV Taiwan and TTV Hong Kong. It is believed to be due to the popularity of the two Korean artists who starred in the play of Lee Young-ae and Ji Jin-Hee. In fact, both of them had come to Taipei and Hong Kong to meet their fans. Also, through the popularity of the drama, the appointment of Lee as a representative of Korean beauty made her popularity stronger among Asian fans, on par with Bae Yong-Joon in Winter Sonata which eventually made DaeJangGeum to take part in eight series of nationwide tours across Japan in 2006 which was held by the MBC Tokyo (Ju, 2010).

The promotion was a real success in gaining attention from the Japanese crowd, escalating the sales of the drama's DVDs and clinched top television ratings in the country. These promotion activities that were created by the Japanese public broadcasting service provided valuable experience to the Japanese personnel in dealing and working with sophisticated media marketing, specifically in the case of 'Dae Jang Geum' (Ju, 2010).

As a consequence, the Korean television networks also began to draw lessons from the Japanese besides the Hollywood system (Ju, 2014). The Korean media's star marketing system for example, escalated sales of Korean entertainment products in the region and much more. For example, at the height of the screening of 'Winter Sonata' around Asia, Bae's stardom in Japan was responsible for the 40% hike of Japanese tourists in Korea as of October 2004.

Furthermore, various Korean celebrities coming from the Korean Wave dramas that received the stardom-rated in Asia have ventured forward into acting in Western movies, particularly Hollywood. Some examples include Rain (Jung Ji-Hoon) been offered in movie called 'Ninja Assassin' in 2009 while Lee Byung-hun in 'G.I. Joe: Rise of Cobra' (2009) and 'G.I. Joe: Retaliation' (2013) as well as in 'Magnificent Seven' in 2016.

Looking back at the tremendous changes happening in the Korean Wave, which can be seen when the Japanese media industry became its biggest sole importer. The drama 'Winter Sonata' was a major breakthrough for the Korean Wave as it conquered Japan. The Japan National Public Broadcasting Organization (NHK) also took full advantage of this highly popular screening by publishing a novel named after the drama, releasing a Japanese version of the drama's Original Sound Track (OST) besides publishing a *Winter Sonata* photo album. This was evidence of the Japanese media's recognition of the popularity of the Korean Wave.

Additionally, the established Korean star system benefited the Korean drama's windowing strategy. One of Korean Broadcasting System's (KBS) drama

productions, 'Full House' in 2004 was a sell-out in more than 15 nations in East and South Asia, receiving top ratings from all those countries. The star system proved to be a success as Rain (Jung Ji-Hoon), a well-known K-pop singer, was cast as the main male actor and was instrumental in increasing television ratings across Asia. It was his debut romantic drama and he excelled in his role. The drama originated from a popular Korean cartoon and was a reproduction with life images and characters, showcasing beautiful Korean cinematography. Rain, who was already a popular singer and well-known in many Asian countries opened the doors for success in 15 different Asian markets (Ju, 2014).

The Korean broadcast industry had a one-source-multi-use tactic along with regional partnerships and official copyrights for its transnational content. Such a market driven tactic in the industry pushed for reforms, resulting in the Korean Broadcasting Act of 2000. The Act advocated structural changes, turning the once state protected industry, making it a free trade order and private partnership. This somehow permitted multichannel broadcasting and mass commercialization of the public network. As a result, Korean broadcasting and media industry are influenced by the principles of market and commercialization for the first time (Ju, 2014).

2.2.8 Joint Ventures in the Korean Media Industry

A joint venture between the Korean media industry with multinational investors resulted from the amendments to the Broadcasting Act. But modifications to the Act in 2000 enabled the Korean media productions to be directly funded by foreign parties. The Broadcasting Act 2000 also brought radical changes by allowing contributions from television networks outside Korea, by up to 30% of the total

production. This reform was aimed at breaking the prowess of Korean TV industry in terms of content production and distribution (Ju, 2014).

Prior to this, there was a perceived monopoly by the three television networks—Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), and Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS)—as they were dominating production, nationwide broadcast and domestic/foreign distribution. They monopolised more than 80% of Korean dramas production with only a few independent production companies that were not bound under subcontracting network programming. Ju (2014) viewed this to be a long-term problem for independent production companies as it meant unequal development in the media industry.

Ju (2014) noted close relationship and contact with regional media production as a result of the continued growth of the Korean Wave. This has led to better program content and the content of pre-sales in the local market or the corporate area. Other changes brought about by such relationships include increased joint ventures further resulting in reduced Korean drama productions. This can also be attributed to the focus on strengthening international gains from investors. Therefore, joint ventures in drama productions were a fruitful step taken by the Korean media industry.

According to Gershon (2000) as cited in Kuwahara (2014), for companies that are willing to take risks, a joint venture in the field of media actually offers advantages. Basically, the attention of joint venture production has been given to the drama that requires high costs - as such full filming abroad or television blockbusters. Thus, investors will gain accordingly in lieu of their investment should a joint-venture

drama succeeded in terms of content value and marketed globally. In this context, the strategy usually manages to attract buyers in the international investors' market (Kuwahara, 2014).

Therefore, according to Ju (2014), due to the priority given for exporting of the Korean dramas, local network providers are still the main agent that constantly revises the export strategy for their program to a different foreign market within and outside Europe. Ju viewed that the selection of Korean drama genre is important as foreign markets have different interests and different genres. Hence, the choices of drama's genre must be smart enough to satisfy local tastes. For example, modern Korean drama mini-series (less than 20 episodes) were taken over to the East and South Asian markets whilst historical dramas are preferred in the western market, and the family type dramas can penetrate the Latin American market (Ju, 2014).

With such belief, Korean network and independent production organizations started establishing a specialist international marketing strategy as a task force movement to effectively manage the export process, including local promotions to copyright agreements (Ju, 2014).

Ju (2014) also found that the exported Korean dramas are distinctive from the original format in terms of subtitles, dubbings, reediting. Korean broadcasters and production organizations keenly sought for joint ventures and co-productions with international corporations at the preproduction level of their dramas as it is more cost-effective and advantageous for international promotion than locally produced Korean drama (Ju, 2014).

In general, the Korean Wave led to glocal inter-relations among the industry players. Glocalization of the transnational Korean popular culture resulted from commercialization, proactive promotions, ventures, and networking. The establishment of the Asian glocalization model comes from the adaptation of strategies from the Japanese and American styles besides strategically combining it with the unique characteristics of Korean programming and marketing. These efforts accelerated the international flow of Korean popular culture (Ju, 2014).

In respond of the above, it could have been said that Korean drama managed to capture an international market as the demand and interest from the international community. Consequently, the successful of Korean drama internationally may be considered due to the fact that their media strategy has been applied and adopted effectively.

2.3 Korean Drama

Guan (2012) mentioned the enormous influence of Korean television dramas as the unforeseen effects on Asian communities as well as in terms of its global relations. Specifically, it caused the ending of Hollywood products' monopoly in their market. The wave, like a Korean cultural tsunami, launched cross-national identities among these ready groups of Asian consumers (Guan, 2012).

According to Guan, the onset of such conditions impelled researches to investigate the underlying factors that lead to the popularity of Korean dramas. They also studied on the main causes are attributed to "self-aggrandizement" embedded in

gender and ethnic or class tensions, "cultural proximity", gender politics and gentrification of Korean drama in Taiwan.

Hogarth (2013) however highlighted the function of Korean TV dramas for launching the Korean Wave in China in the mid-1990s. It appeared that the Chinese people sought cultural inspiration from their Asian counterparts going through a sense of disillusionment with American-led Western culture and as a result of hosting the 1995 Asian Games in Beijing (Cho et al., 2003; Changsun Pak, 2010). Kim et al. (2007) also emphasised how a higher level of interest in a range of fields including music, film, food, fashion, and other culture-based products ensued from the airing of Korean TV programmes.

In recent years, the increase in the demand of South Korean dramas around East and Southeast Asia produced an unprecedented impact on the Asian communities. Some researchers have attributed the popularity of Korean TV drama series to amongst others, the 'the attractive "brag" embedded in gender and ethnic tension / class, "neighbourhood culture", gender politics and gentrification of Korean dramas in Taiwan. ' Yet, Keane and Moran (2008); as cited in Guan (2012) argued that internationalization is the main influencer of the success of television formats.

Couldry and McCarthy (2004a, b) as cited in Kim et al. (2007) however, seem agreed with the arguments but they added that despite the availability of various genres, the popular TV drama series is that which attracts the audience's addiction as they contain exciting stories for people to discuss. This explains why Korean dramas affect and influence human lives (H'ng & Yazdanifard, 2014)

Jang and Paik (2012) in their study of "Korean Wave as Tool for Korea's New Cultural Diplomacy" viewed the popularity of Korean dramas as varied in different countries. They discovered that for Americans, dramas produced in Korea are much simpler and entertaining. In Asia, viewers were interested to see lifestyles and trends that are new and can be followed. Meanwhile in the Middle East, audiences were comfortable with the deep emotions and romantic passion without over sexuality and among Muslims, Korean dramas are deemed as 'safe' for watching (Jang & Paik, 2012).

There are numerous reasons for Korean dramas' popularity in other nations they are broadcast. Jang and Paik, (2012) stated that Americans liked the Korean dramas as they were relaxing and full of cheer while Europeans found the romantic plots easy to follow. The Asian viewers also discovered favourable lifestyles to emulate while the Middle Eastern were happy with the subtle representations of feelings and authentic romantic passion without being sexually explicit. The Muslim countries found the dramas 'safe' to watch, and in particular, Saudi Arabia's monarchy-based government chose the hero-themed dramas *Dae Jang Geum* and *Jumong* for emphasizing support and loyalty to the government (Jang and Paik, 2012) .

According to National Public Radio (NPR), Korean TV drama has been described as having Asian shared cultural tastes. "Those are Confucian values like the importance of family, obedience and respect for one's elders. Values that many Chinese feel they've lost" (Lim, 2006) as cited in Ju (2010). Korean drama reflected Confucian moral values which are represented in the plot and the narrative. Moreover, these deep Asian characteristics were combined with various modern Western inspired

images that are yearned by many Asians. Notably, metropolitan lifestyles and modern cosmopolitan ideology are prominent in these Korean drama settings (Chua, 2004; Lim, 2006). Westernized modernity as pictured by the TV dramas shows that modernization in Asia has been equally associated with Westernization (Chua, 2004; Iwabuchi, 2008a) as cited in Ju (2010). Also, the Western model of free enterprise is used as a benchmark for Asians in pursuit of contentment in life, either individually or collectively (Ju, 2010).

Tastes between Asians and Westerners differ, with the latter enjoying traditional and –against all odd” themes in Korean historical epic dramas while Westerners prefer the refreshing humour, fanciful plots, and sincerity of "My Lovely Kim Sam-soon" and "Boys over Flowers". Unlike Latin American soap operas that show sexual and sensational topics and scenes, "My Lovely Kim Sam-soon" managed to grab the attention of the Peruvians with romanticism and modern Cinderella storylines, showing on major television net-works at prime time slots instead of the news (Jang & Paik, 2012).

Ryoo (2009) described the famous Korean TV drama Winter Sonata was earlier raising in the Asian countries. This success was followed by other popular dramas such as "A Tale of Autumn" in Malaysia, and "Lovers in Paris" in Vietnam. In fact, according to Ryoo again, at the end of 2002, the Korean wave has become a new economic and cultural influence.

Although various responses on the cause of the popularity of Korean dramas, however Shim (2006) expressed the view that Koreans added their own plot twists by

integrating local features together with special and creative scenes (Guan, 2012). Similarly, Hogarth (2013) attributed the huge appeal of these dramas to the universal, humanistic themes that resonate with many viewers of various cultural backgrounds. He emphasises this reason to explain the underlying factors that lead towards the overwhelming attention from the audience of Korean Wave.

On the other hand, Hogarth (2013) added that besides continuously evolving storylines, more action, such as martial arts, horsemanship and swordsmanship, have been added to historical dramas. He attributes these to the continued high demand for Korean TV dramas in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau. Moreover, they have now made forays into Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Mongolia, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, India, Israel, etc. He added that while they are relatively new in North and Latin America, Europe and Austral-Asia (Australia, New Zealand, the island of New Guinea, and neighbouring islands in the Pacific Ocean), they uncovered a niche online market in the US, Canada, Peru, Colombia, Poland, Hungary, Australia and New Zealand (Hogarth, 2013).

Meanwhile Chuang and Lee (2013) viewed; the success of Korean dramas can be seen as a result of hybridization. They said this can be seen on Korean pop star – Rain, whose been described as "A kind of perfect fantasy guy who is the best of all worlds: simultaneously Asian but modern and Western but not too foreign" (Jung, 2009, p. 78). In short, his victory is due to the integration of physical and musical blends.

Hogarth (2013) has also attracted attention by saying a differentiating factor is that Korean stars possess unique characteristics even though there are elements of westernization that can be seen through hair dyes as well as surgeries for cosmetic purpose. Hence, "Asian-ness" takes centre stage (Hogarth, 2013) as the dramas also reflect traditional Asian beliefs that make Asian fans feel comfortable.

There are numerous reasons for Korean dramas' popularity in other nations they are broadcast. Hogart (2013) discovered that the Korean Wave products or called "Hallyuwood" (Kim, 2006) are much diverse and more internationally appealing as compared to Bollywood and Nollywood (Chang, 2006; Shin, 2006).

According to Jang and Paik, (2012) Korean dramas are seen by Americans as simpler and entertaining while Europeans prefer Korean dramas for their romance and plots that are not complicated. Among Asian viewers, Korean dramas' lifestyles are interesting for them to follow. The dramas are considered safe watching for Middle East viewers as they are without overt sexuality, focussing instead on subtle romance. It is noted that the Saudi Arabian monarchy-ruled government broadcasted 'Dae Jang Geum' and 'Jumong' as they portray hero-themed drama that emphasize on being a loyal citizen. As Asian audiences prefer traditions and "against all odd" elements in the Korean historical series, the Western viewers prefer something humorous, fancy and sincere plot styles including "My Lovely Kim Sam-soon" and "Boys over Flowers". In Peru, the romance "My Lovely Kim Sam-soon" depicting modern Cinderella plots was broadcasted on their mainstream televisions instead of the news during prime time. This shows a contrasting situation in the Latin America

where sexual and sensational plots are more preferred in their soap operas (Jang & Paik, 2012).

Basically, Asian viewers find the themes in Korean films and dramas as more emphatic than Western entertainment. Themes such as love, family concerns and Confucius teachings are portrayed in a world of changing technology (Ryoo, 2009). They highlight the story of adherence to traditions and family whilst establishing individualism in fast-changing, modernistic world. Therefore, this paradoxical balance keeps the dramas popular with neighbouring nations (Chua, 2004; Iwabuchi, 2002; Kim, 2011). Although some criticize the dramas' lack "Korean-ness" (Baozi, 2001) as cited in Chuang and Lee (2013), or are not "authentically Korean" as some might think (Jung, 2009), some are exposing the sense of cultural hybridization, resulting from the actors' negotiations with their own cultural identities while interacting with global forms (Shim, 2006). From this perspective, globalization has seen the growth of unique integration that assists the gaining of local features and identities throughout international surroundings (Chuang & Lee, 2013).

Actually, the 'Korean trend' occurred first in Asia. According to Kim (2004), it was developed from cultural, belief, practice and social-norm sameness founded by ethics, laws and rituals. This current trend in Asia begs the question of cultural proximity.

From the point of the story line, the Korean drama is characterized by Asian culture that offers more harmonious ending of hostility and friction. Even story lines with competitiveness are usually mixed with cooperation in the finale. This emphasizes

the inherent nature of Asians who do not simply produce storyline with successful endings of a conflict, but rather focuses on storylines that strengthen moral values through dynamic surrounding sentiment.

Kim (2004) has categorized the analysis of favourite story lines in Asia into five elements. There are as follows:

- i) Harmony: this element values the degree and approaches in solving conflict in the storyline.
- ii) Tense: this component looks into how the tensions in the story are not developed on one matter but the main issue in the stream of a story.
- iii) Compromise: this part evaluates the level to which the conflict is solved through common concern and understanding.
- iv) Low participation: this element deals with the extent to which the viewer is obsessed by compassion.
- v) Agreement: this aspect evaluates the degree to which viewer reinforces traditional values (Kim, 2004)

Analyses conducted on the increasing of Korean TV dramas' demand in Asia basically highlight on the contents and methods of the dramas, as well as the appearance of the celebrities which focuses on the refreshing and dynamic plotline and structure of the dramas which are familiar to everyone. In addition, the production skill including the set design, music score and camera work must be excellent while the actors should be physically appealing, strikingly individual, have good sense of fashion and outstanding acting skills (Shin, 2002). Other than that, the common values related to Confucianism storylines including family-based values,

respecting the elderly, prioritizing sons and special relationship between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law must be present in order to (Mee, 2005) ensure the popularity of Korean TV dramas across Asia.

Another factor that leads to popularity of Korean dramas is the progress of hero as written in the script or series. According to Mozafari (1999), most Korean dramas are composed with storylines that are objected towards showing the progress of an individual and his attempt to gain vital objective. He added that a hero must display the qualities of a brave individual who is also a successful person and a fighter coming from lower levels of society. Hero is also portrayed as someone who has to face hardship where eventually audience will try to emulate step by step of their imaginary hero. Strengthened by facial expressions that are powerful to showcase the hardship, audience will have the tendency to indulge in his story and finally become more excited as he gains his objective. To put it briefly, the length of the serial would not bother (Mozafari, 1999).

Korean drama is the top genre that is marketed to foreign nation especially Asian countries. As Korean TV dramas get more popular, Kim and Park (2008) discovered that both the export price and networks have escalated with regards to marketing and trying out numerous means of financing. An example of that is the ad hoc networking developed by MBC (Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation) in Indonesia where 23 local stations there spared its 6.00 to 7.00 pm time slot for ‘MBC Time’ zone (Kim & Park, 2008).

Changsu Pak (2010) as cited by Hogarth (2013), that in terms of foreign distribution, there was an 80.3 % increase for Korean dramas exported to China in 1995, which was \$171, 600, as compared to 1994, which was \$95,200. Therefore, of all the discussion above, Changsu Pak had compressed the logic of Korean drama popularity. He said that many reasons account for booming acceptance in China and other Asian nations:

- a) High quality: due to modern camera shots and angles, the Korean television dramas are often perceived to be "arguably some of the best TV productions in the world".
- b) Beauty: mesmerizing venues in changing seasons, intriguing monuments, stunning cinematography, pretty and handsome young actors and actresses, gorgeous fashion and cosmetics, superb periodic costumes, delight the viewers. Even scenes of poverty and squalor are beautifully presented.
- c) "Asian-ness" is depicted in contemporary, modern modern images either in ultra-modern globalized or interesting historical settings. The Asian actors are immediately appealing to Asian viewers because of their physical similarities (Chang et al. 2006:11; Jian 2008:102). Even though the dialogues have been dubbed into the local language (Chinese or Japanese) the dramas are easy to understand and listen to as if they were locally produced. These dramas also reflect the Asian way of life and values, some of which are Confucian-oriented, such as family ties, love or romance, respect for elders, loyalty, sibling love and emphasis on education. The Korean TV dramas made the viewers feel nostalgic about the past, reminding them of their cultural roots. Jain (2008) pointed out that some go as far as to say that Korean TV dramas

"encourage the Chinese to reassess their traditional culture and give rise to a renaissance in traditional culture".

- d) "Asia-ness" is the concept of Korean drama storyline. This concept reflects the polite, cautious and well behave when reflecting traditional Asia towards sex. The actresses are mostly in their modest attires to display little sexual appeals. For instance, *'In Summer Scent'*, the character, Hyewon, played by a sexy actress, Son Yejin, did not appear in a swim suit due to scars from the heart transplant surgery. The couple hardly kissed and there was only a scene showing a touch of their lips. In *DaeJangGeum*, the lead actress Yi Yongae did not prefer to take up the kissing scenes as she said it was not necessary. The only suggestion of sex between the couples is the birth of their baby, usually after marriage (Hogarth, 2013). The modest storylines are important factors that initially enabled Korean TV dramas to become popular in China and consequently, spread to other Asian and Islamic markets including Iran and Indonesia (Kim 2010).
- e) Korean actors and actresses are depicted as steadfast, courageous, and strong in the face problems and yet remain modest. The women are portrayed as strong, good-hearted, independent-minded, able, high-principled people with courage of conviction, able to surmount problems even in dreadful circumstances. Such empowering images of women appeal to the long suffering Asian female viewers who live in a male-dominated society (Kim 2003:165). Also, Korean dramas depict men as gentle, caring, romantic, lovers and fathers, and sometimes luxurious husbands. Although gender roles and values can differ from culture to culture in terms of share similarities in their portrayal of women, theoretically there were no much different between

Western soap operas/dramas and Korean soap operas/dramas. According to Rogers (2003) as cited in Chuang and Lee (2013), Western soap operas are television fiction specifically shaped for women. They generally adhere to certain characteristics that make up a feminine appeal, such as sexuality as empowerment, and the prevalence of a matriarchal society in which the power of women in the relationships are emphasized (Rogers, 2003). Likewise, Korean dramas/soap operas tend to be geared towards female audiences. Although, in general, characteristics of Korean women are different compared to Americans, they are represented as stronger female characters (Kim, 2011; Lee & Cho, 1990). Thus, Chuang and Lee (2013) added that the Korean and Western dramas/soap operas share a common value in providing female characters with a greater sense of action (Chuang & Lee, 2013).

- f) Modernity and tradition: Respect for traditional Korean culture as well as new Western-orientated globalized culture, surrounded with Asia audiences.
- g) Low cost: China initially offered at a price lower than the price of Japanese products. Cheap copies of the Korean dramas were easily available with Chinese dubbing. The Asian economic downturn in the 1990s saw the illegal copies of Korean dramas DVD being distributed at cheaper prices. Despite being illegal and of low quality, they received a very good response. The sale of original DVDs declined and were even relegated to a lower price. However as mentioned before, when Korean TV dramas enjoyed good reputation in some Asian countries, Kim and Park (2008) noted the increase in export price and also diverse kinds of financial deals.

- h) Skilfully story-telling: The skilfully crafted storylines have a firm hold on the viewers (Ch'oe 2007) as cited in Hogarth (2013). Unlike the popular, long-running English language soap operas such as 'Neighbours', 'Home and Away', 'East Enders' and 'Coronation Street', which never took off in Asian countries which are shown in a serial. The serials, comprising 20 one-hour-long episodes, represent a complete story and are regularly shown every week. Korean dramas, however do not contain controversial issues, such as homosexuality, drug abuse and prostitution. The stories are based on pure eternal love between a male and a female, love triangles, altruism, family, friendship, human warmth, human frailty and errors, forgiveness and reconciliation, triumph of good over evil and tragedy caused by human conditions.
- i) Universal human themes: Most importantly, they are based on the general human ideals of "truth, goodness and beauty" (Hogarth, 2013). These can be described in two ways:

Firstly, their portrayal of contemporary Korean lives and society is based on the universal truth. Humans are complex beings, embodying good and bad emotions, as a fact of life. The "bad" in human nature is described as hatred, pride, prejudice, jealousy, envy, covetousness, greed, vanity, meanness, cowardice and possessiveness which lead to deception, betrayal, violence, theft, murder, suicide, and distrust, causing pain, sorrow, and, ultimately, destruction. The above themes are almost universal (Hogarth, 2013).

Secondly, they showcase the triumph of 'good' over 'evil'. People errand and even the good are capable of bad things, but "good" deeds are always rewarded. The 'baddies' eventually get their justice done and are punished, and in the end the good victims triumph. Sometimes the bad ones also repent and do 'good' deeds at the end of story. "The 'good' in human nature is presented as love, compassion, sympathy, understanding, friendship, loyalty, constancy and purity which generate human warmth and altruism leading to charity, family support, trust, and also importantly, forgiveness and reconciliation. All these 'good' things in life contribute to happiness, comfort, peace and harmony, in life which is riddled with the 'bad' "(Hogarth, 2013).

Lastly, Korean TV dramas emphasize both visual and spiritual beauty, as immortalized by John Keats in 'Ode to a Grecian Urn' (Hogarth, 2013).

People enjoy Korean drama for several reasons. Sung (2010) as cited by Parc and Moon (2013) attributed the success of the dramas to factors such as nationalism. The drama 'Dae Jang Geum' (Jewel in the Palace) for example, depicts the fortunes of an orphaned cook who later became the first woman doctor to serve the king in the royal court of 16th century Korea. The drama is popular as it has family values, based on Confucianism and also many Asian sentiments. Likewise, Lee and Lee (2007) as cited in Parc and Moon (2013) stated that Korean dramas have many attractions such good script writers, producers and actresses and actors compared with other dramas. They are also eager in consistent investment in terms of sophisticated Korean consumers and fervent preference for dramas for demand conditions which could also be one of k-drama attraction to many (H'ng & Yazdanifard, 2014).

The intriguing plots of these dramas that are shown weekly without any conclusion keep the audience guessing about the next episode. They make the audience anticipate what may happen next from one episode to another episode. Thus the audience are kept on tenterhooks and they remain curious about how the story may develop in the next episode (Kim & Wang, 2012). Various plots and themes, such as unconditional love, are thus used as a strategy to keep the audience hooked (Parc & Moon, 2013). These strategies ensure that the viewer are entertained and excited, and explains their addiction to a particular series.

Chua (2010) discussed the influence of these dramas in making the audience commit to watch till the series ends, setting aside precious time to catch the drama in time.

This sense of addiction to the drama series makes it unbearable for them to miss even one episode. The audience's engagement with the plot and storyline is sustained until the series is completed also because each twist in the plot will make the audiences create into intimate connection with the characters (Chua, 2010). Moreover, the attractive casts are also used as part of the drama strategy, as good looking actors and actresses is an effective marketing strategy to arrest the viewers' attention (The Washington Post, 2006) as cited in (H'ng & Yazdanifard, 2014).

Schulze (2013) emphasized the use of Korean drama the primary medium used in spreading hallyu. The response was beyond expectations as reported by Kim and Ryoo (2007) who likened the arrival of 'Winter Sonata' and 'Yon-sam' (the actor/hero of drama) to Japan as the downpour of the monsoon season. 'Yon-sam' or 'Bae Yong Jun', the main actor of the drama, became a huge success in Japan after

the drama was aired. The drama, aired in 2003, only achieved fame in 2004, making its way to Japanese front covers. As a measure of its huge appeal and success, the drama was later replayed by NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) on prime time in the same year. Similarly, Taiwan aired two mini-series dramas, namely, 'Autumn in My Heart' and 'Firework', which also proved to be a hit with large audiences in the country (Kim & Ryoo, 2007).

The demand for these K-dramas eventually made third prices shoot up (Huang, 2011) especially since Taiwanese stations in Taiwan were also competing to purchase the broadcast rights. This price hike was also a result of worldwide demand. It is obvious that the development of K-drama was only focused among Asian countries in the beginning as they were believed to be historically the same in term of its Confucianism tradition (Chua, 2010). As highlighted by Ho (2011) as cited in H'ng and Yazdanifard (2014), these similarities were somehow useful as China is the next economy power after the USA which clearly offers a big potential especially for sponsorships.

In Europe, the establishment of k-drama was first begun in April 2011 through its first three Korean dramas which were 'Iris', 'Chuno' (Slave Hunter) and 'Jeonwoo' (Comrades), at the same time a Belgium production was given the rights to air the dramas in Europe (Dongailbo, 2011) as cited in Parc & Moon (2013). While originally confined to East Asia, eventually the K-dramas invaded other countries in Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. In sum, k-dramas went viral since the early 2000s (H'ng & Yazdanifard, 2014).

Some examples of popular Korean drama series that booming in Korea and other countries such as Japan, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Mongolia, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, India, Israel, as well as Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia are the serial drama of 'Jewel in the Palace' and 'Full House'. 'Jewel in the Palace' is a 60-episode drama series and was aired starting 15 September 2003 till 30 March 2004. A viewer rate of 57.8% was obtained and it was the highest-rated drama in the history of South Korea. Hogarth (2013) claimed that it was very famous in China and Taiwan (2004), Hong Kong and Japan (2005) followed by Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam which proved the success of Korean Wave. It did not stop even in the Asian region only but was well received in Australia, USA, Sweden, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey Peru, India, Israel, Colombia, Egypt, Romania, Canada, Hungary and New Zealand. The success of the drama 'Jewel in the Palace' was followed by another hit TV series, known as 'Full House'. 'Full House', shown on KBS 2 between July 14 to September 4, 2004 is often cited as the main reason for the expansion of the Korean Wave. The 'Full House' star Chōng Chihun, popularly known as Rain/Bi, a successful pop idol, later achieved stardom in Hollywood (Hogarth, 2013).

Yet, there are several other factors contributing to their success. Undeniably, the Korean government played a big role. Notably, the government took significant steps via the formulation of a strategic cultural development policy, to advance its music, film and TV drama series. The role of the government will be discussed further in this chapter. Demand for these products grew rapidly locally and also internationally, spreading across the globe from Asia to the Middle East and Latin America. A number of the products have been translated to English. In addition, the advancement

of technologies has increased the demands for satellite TV channels, cable TVs, Facebook and YouTube as well as DVDs which help promote the popularity of K dramas internationally and contributed to the Korean Wave and 'drama fever' phenomenon (Mozafari, 1999).

Various analysts have highlighted the social and family values that Korean TV dramas propagate. From the moral point of view, Korean dramas are seen as containing more quality and values as compared to European and American series (Mozafari, 1999). These dramas are full of emotive plots and dramatic storylines, drawn from Asian culture.

2.3.1 Korean Television Drama

The popularity of Korean TV dramas has outnumbered all other Korean pop culture exports which undoubtedly have attracted audiences from all walks of life. Transcending geography, culture and nationhood, *Winter Sonata* was one of the trendsetters that brought along the Korean pop culture which received high ratings among viewers throughout Asia (Kim et al., 2009).

Since the late 1980s, the privatization of media industries and advancement of technologies have resulted in radical transformation of global business pertaining to TV programming which once under tight controls in numerous nations. In the long-standing business of international trading, individual TV programs have been traded as per-series basis such as drama series or as a single product like documentary programs by the related personnel in the country to their business counterparts overseas (Oba, 2007).

K-pop entertainment industry makes use of many means in order to promote their music videos as well as to communicate with international audiences. This is done through teasers on YouTube, strengthened by Facebook and Twitter accounts where Ahn (2013) mentioned that it is important to integrate these means in order to maximise the potentials of Korean entertainment, as summarized below:

- i) Align strategic business model with social media
- ii) Maximize various social media channels
- iii) Engage customers with on-and offline promotions
- iv) Stimulate audience with exclusive contents.

Ahn (2013) claimed that this should be the parameter used by entertainment organizations who wish to maximise the potential of their business through social media.

The role of Korean drama in shaping the evolution of the Korean wave and its economic impact cannot be overemphasized. Its transmission has directly contributed to increased tourism for South Korea and cultural exports. Additionally, K-drama has profited from sponsorship marketing and vice versa to boost sales. Due to the dramas' drawing power, and matched with advancements in technology, the dramas have been used as a marketing tool in sponsorship marketing. Besides, technological advancements have also brought about technology sponsorship, bringing added value. The benefits brought by communication means that these dramas are at everyone's fingertips, people are able to enjoy the K-drama any time, anywhere. One of many examples is the Korean drama titled 'You Who Came from the Stars' that

became an instantaneous hit and trend in South Korea and also world-wide (H'ng & Yazdanifard, 2014).

The role of the South Korean media industry has been encouraging with regard to transnational cultural flows and media collaborations. The unprecedented Korean Wave propelled the Korean media industry to the forefront in international media exchange, connecting local and global media in production, distribution, and reproduction. Generally, the multilateral streams of Korean media content caused a proactive transformation of the Korean media industry. Once considered as a marginal system, Korean media has now forged its way into international markets, strengthening the scope of media practices and commercial impacts. The heyday of Korean popular culture symbolises the resurgence of Asian media, coming after the Hong Kong film boom of 1980s and early 1990s.

2.3.2 Korean Drama Market

In economic terms, globalization might be explained as the pooling together and inflow as well as outflow of economic resources that can result in dramatic change in the fortunes of a country. This is also known as the "spatial convergence of capital" (Mosco, 1996). According to him, the pooling together of capital happens in enterprises within the nation. Due to improved communication and technology, the links between the population, and the popular culture will eventually reflect national issues and market conditions. In the past, the practice has always been to import pop culture from the United States (Tunstall, 2008).

Generally, bigger nations will not import media content from smaller nations as the content may not easily resonate with the audience of the latter. Yet, the Korean Wave is unique as it has broken the hierarchy in TV program circulation. In this sense, the Korean Wave is comparable to the earlier Japanese wave, particularly with reference to its widespread expansion in the greater Asian region (Ju, 2010).

Since the Korean media industry held a rather insignificant place in the global market prior to the Korean Wave, it suggests that the Wave brought vital changes to the Korean media industry and broadcasting system. Also, Korean media productions have vastly improved due to great competition at home. The advancements in Korean technology and expertise of its production and media personnel means that more doors have been opened to them. This includes the live transmission of the football World Cup Games (2002) and other international events. Additionally, Korea's advanced Internet access has seen the widespread transmission of Korean media content to online audiences worldwide, specifically to the younger generation. This means that larger international audiences are now aware of Korean TV productions (Ju, 2010).

Notably, the increase in the Korean drama distribution was also connected to the Asian financial crisis that hit most parts of Asia in 1997, which had rendered the nation bankrupt and eventually placed under the jurisdiction of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Such developments impacted the Korean media industry as well as the nation's economy, thus forcing the media industry to venture abroad to counter their home losses, in the hope of securing a niche media market abroad.

The Asian economic crisis meant that foreign TV programs had become unaffordable for Asian buyers and thus, the Korean's intra-regional marketing strategies came at an opportune time. The relatively cheaper Korean television programs became increasingly popular, as illustrated by their forays into the Mandarin channels of Singaporean television in 1999, snapping up a sizeable share of the viewers from the established state-owned station, MediaCorp. This was enabled by the showing of a mix of Korean TV drama series and local variety shows.

This import of Korean TV drama series by Mediacorp persisted until half of the available program slots were obtained. As a result, prime slot TV showed at least one Korean TV drama series every night after prime time daily news (Chua, 2004; Ju, 2010).

Korea evolved into a new centre for the production of popular transnational culture in Asia, as result of the wave (Kim, 2006), growing in a 'free culture' environment beyond regulatory restrictions. Digitalization meant that Asian fans had easy access to social media as illustrated by the services provided by Tudou.com, China's video sharing website which enables fans to watch the most recent Korean drama without paying any fees (Kim, 2006).

Speedy delivery of Korean media content has facilitated the Korean media exporting companies in marketing television dramas to other Asian local television stations. The Internet also aids Korean entertainment companies in promoting K-Pop music (Korean Pop Music) in Southeast Asia as seen from the meteoric rise of the Korean

boy band, Super Junior that topped the Philippines MYX chart in the international music category (Peichi, 2014).

The Korean wave has impacted the nation's income and Korean drama has a significant part in generating revenue. Korean film and television industries has seen a substantial rise of 84% in real GDP between 2005 until 2011; indicating an annual increment of 10.7% (Oxford Economics, 2012) as cited in Kim & Ryoo (2007 p 186). Estimates by Oxford Economics (2012), show that approximately 7,549 billion is being contributed by film and television industries to the South Korean GDP in 2011. The highly successful Winter Sonata singlehandedly contributed US\$ 6.24 million or 0.1% to South Korea GDP (2004) from its impact on the hospitality industry - tourism, hotel, restaurant, wholesale and retail trade (Maeil Business Newspaper December 20, 2004; as cited in Kim & Ryoo, 2007).

2.4 Culture

Ching (2000), Ju (2010) and Vu (2011) previously linked the success of Korean drama and Korean Wave with culture. In fact, most of the researchers were also acknowledged the roles of the Korean culture in contributing to the success. Due to that, it is crucial to understand what makes the Korean culture able to attract a lot of interest and attention to the other Asian countries including Malaysia. This study will look into the studies done by the previous researchers related to culture and media.

Although humans crave for a place to call their own, they also want to discover what is there outside their 'place'. It is natural for human beings to want to be in a place where they feel that they belong (Giddens, 1995) as cited in Servaes and Lie (2003).

Meyrowitz (1985) described that the sense of place is somewhat natural. Even though there is some intrusion of social distant forces, their feelings and perception of places are still affiliated with the memories and personal relations possessed together with social, cultural and natural settings of their places. In reality, culture has had various definitions and it depends on what culture it is associated.

To give a clear meaning to the culture is not a simple matter as according to Kluckhohn (1954) as cited in Fletcher and Feng (2006) said that culture is to society what memory is to the individual. However, culture also have the characteristic of being able to evolve over time via the distribution of information, influences from media and age groups, political and economic changes as well as attitudes including gender-based and the process of assimilation (Fletcher and Fang, 2006).

Due to different views held by different cultures, it is desirable to see the role of culture in many aspects. In considering how culture affects consumer behaviour, McCracken (1986) as cited in Fletcher and Feng (2006, p.204) suggested that the real value of any commodity is the cultural meaning that it carries and conveys, rather than just its utilitarian character and commercial value (p. 204).

Mooji (1998) suggested how culture may influence consumer behaviour through group membership, reference groups, or opinions. Similarities within the different cultures may lead to attraction, and this in turn, making first impressions more favourable and increasing their responsiveness to as cited in Fletcher and Feng (2006).

Fletcher and Fang (2006) also stated many previous studies have highlighted the significant role of culture in business. They stated that in exports, culture plays a key role in forming international business partnerships.

Therefore, in terms of television drama productions, culture also influences the international networks involved in the process. This includes the actors, the activities, the transformation of resources and the atmosphere in which this takes place. While the actors bring the culture of the country they come from, the interactions in the process have an impact on the local culture and vice versa. In fact, cultural considerations may also impact the use of resources in the production and export process (Fletcher and Fang, 2006).

To better understand how culture plays an influencing factor to the public, the following section discusses previous studies on the culture of Korea and Asia.

2.5.1 Korean Culture

Korean popular culture (KPC) has achieved unprecedented worldwide recognition, beginning in East and Southeast Asian countries, and then spreading to China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan (Hong & Kim, 2013). Its popularity is now extended to the Middle East, former Soviet Union countries in Central Asia, and several European countries. This widespread impetus has been made possible by the varied and hybrid KPC productions that are rigorously communicated (Hong & Kim, 2013).

Korean culture has contributed its role into shaping Korean capitalism distinctive form and nature instead of just borrowing from or simply adopting Western

capitalism. According to Hanhee (2003), when the Korean economic system was underdeveloped, Korean culture took responsibility for the malfunction. Due to this, as Korea began to emerge as an advance industrial country; there has been an emphasis on cultural contribution which determined the function of culture in the nation (Hanhee, 2003).

Choe (2003) believes that Korean culture contains “dominant values writ large.” He also believes that Korean culture puts emphasis on its shared values that are widely shared among them through practices from their previous generations. As a result, these values have somehow influenced their people to believe that they are doing things according to the right and proper way. Nonetheless, Duk (2003) claims that Korean culture can be represented by various high values including collectivism, authoritarianism (gwonwijuui), high level of anxiety, long term orientation and high spirits (sin Myeong) which are known to be the core and special culture of the Korean people (Duk, 2003).

Korean aesthetics through such values or norms as ecstasy, unconventionality (pagyek), deviation (iltal), free-spiritedness (jayubunbangham), and rejection of the conventional mold (teul geobu). At the same time, he discovered that religions have its own influences towards values of human relations when it is dealt with culture (Duk, 2003).

According to Western researchers, Neo-Confucianism was a major influence towards culture practiced by the Koreans resulting in distinctive nature of their culture. At the same time, influences from the Neo-Confucianism have established a Korean lineage

system that has a strong patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal system which basically was also developed from China and Japan (Hanhee, 2003).

The concept of cultural hybridization implies that there must be similarities between the host and foreign cultures, so that the similarities facilitate the marketing of the new product. In other words, cultural proximity is vital for a more successful introduction of the cultural product (Iwabuchi, 2002). This explains why KPC is readily accepted in varying Asian countries, such as Japan, Taiwan, China, and Thailand. As Iwabuchi (2001, p. 56) claims, KPC provides "a sense of living in the shared time and common experience of a certain (post)modernity which cannot be represented well by American popular culture" This likens it to the idea of a middlebrow culture, in that firstly, its easy acceptability due to shared cultural backgrounds and secondly, the superficial and varied nature of pop culture that easily attracts the attention of the population (Hong & Kim, 2013). However, some degree of apprehensiveness was evident amongst culturally conservative generations in China and Taiwan, who felt that Korean Popular Culture (KPC) had an initial, intoxicating effect on their younger generations (Shim, 2006).

KPC is different from the traditionally bilateral and temporarily rigid topography of Asia and other regions in the world in a way that it re-enchants viewers with famous culture who have established their senses through experiencing movements in social discourses. In other words, it is a new face where the former orthodox culture is diminished while new and famous culture is globalized (Hong & Kim, 2013).

To get better insights into culture, this study also discusses Korean Popular Culture (KPC), Asian Culture and Culture Diversity.

2.5.2 Korean Popular Culture

The ‘Korean Wave’ achieved popularity in Southeast Asia due to cultural proximity and cultural relevance that Korean media products have with other Southeast Asian societies (Shim 2013; Suh Cho & Kwon 2013). The phenomenon gained impetus across Asia due to great support from Korean media corporations and the Korean government. Its widespread popularity was augmented by an audience-centred approach, Pan-Asian consumerism and fan-based communities.

Lewis et. al (2012) cited in Peichi (2014) stated that a new liberalism in Asia, characterised by a consumer and choice based transnational TV genre, facilitated the spread of the wave. It is characterized by complex cultural exchange between Korean content producers and Southeast Asia ‘Korean Wave’ consumers, and the power of the wave to lead content creation for popular cultural producers in Southeast Asia. (Peichi, 2014). Effectively, it emerged as "a form of pop nationalism that allows the nation-state to engage the forces of globalization in order to produce a transnational popular culture" (Joo, 2011). The wave was also seen as a form of cultural diplomacy, as the promotion of Korean culture capitalized on cultural themes that resonate with Asian consumers. For example, according to Cho (2010) "Korean-Malaysian relations have improved with the rise of ‘Korean Wave’ in Malaysia. Many Malaysians develop favourable views toward Korean society through their consumption of popular Korean television dramas" (Cho 2010). This was agreed by Shim (2011) which he mentioned "the popularity of Korean celebrity also has

contributed to closer ties between the Korean government and other Southeast Asian countries. For instance, Korean idol group U-Kiss paid a visit to Singapore to participate in a youth event that was prepared for local politician during the general election in 2011. In this event, both the Korean ambassador of Singapore and local politician also attended to support the ‘The Kings of Freedom Concert’ and to celebrate the Korean-Singapore relations" (Peichi, 2014).

2.5.3 Asian Culture

Asian culture is unique. While American pop culture has successfully made inroads into Asian countries with minimal resistance, thus there is a sense of “emptiness” experienced by consumers of this foreign culture, stemming from the lack of cultural proximity (Shim, 2006).

As mentioned previously, Korean programs are able to satisfy Asian emotional needs as they are easily assimilated in a similar cultural context, cultural proximity and expressiveness. The preference of Korean programs showed that Asians express sympathy for Asian cultural frames including family morals, highly morality and love and sacrifice (Kim, 2004). Asian cultural values are similar to Confucian values, but with different orientations. These different value orientations of the Asian culture market are summarized as follows:

Firstly, the Asians emphasize ‘harmony’ which may be adapted to new situations, although its strict morals cannot be compromised. These reflect the teachings of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism that emphasise interdependence within social relationships. (Kim, 2004).

Second, for industrialized countries such as Taiwan, Japan, Singapore and Korea, time is emphasised in solving issues, besides cooperation, compensation, life in organizations and the environment (Kim, 2004).

Third, the Asian culture emphasizes space, especially in relationships. Also, as Kim (2004) suggested, "it places a high value on order, has a higher tolerance for hierarchy and deductive-oriented cultures that emphasize abstract thinking and the reality of ideas, moral values, theories, and principles." In capitalist modern times, Asian culture was attained through a chain of historical events and the individual's personal life experiences (Ju, 2010).

In the meantime, there are a variety of responses and views on Asian cultural phenomenon. Leung (1992) noted that Asians are accustomed towards the context accepting orientation and people in them response in a universal manner. In addition, uncertainties and disorders are also accepted and perceived as a natural phenomenon among Asians (Lamposki & Emden, 1996) as cited in Fletcher and Fang (2006) as well as dealing with conditions on an individual or communal basis as the situations entail (Fletcher & Fang, 2006). This may be referred to the traits of religious observance and social philosophy as well as the Yin Yang concept that is widely practiced among the Asians.

As Asian cultures are influenced by religions and many gods, they are not monotheistic. However, this statement is untrue for Islamic societies. Confucius teachings are related with relationships among mankind; Taoism is related to harmonious life while Buddhism is related to people's immortal lives (Fang, 1999)

and Hinduism possesses numerous gods. Over time, people has been following these practices but viewed them more as philosophies than religious beliefs.

According to NPR (National Public Radio), Korean television drama has portrayed an appreciation of Asian culture. "Those are Confucian values like the importance of family, obedience and respect for ones' elders. Values that many Chinese feel they've lost" (Lim, 2006, para. 5). Sustained Confucian morals and values are well represented in the plots and narratives in Korean dramas. In addition to these common Asian characteristics, Korean dramas grasp the Western modern image, as yearned by many Asian people; a colourful city life and refined cosmopolitan ideology are highly noticeable in the setting of the dramas (Chua, 2004; Lim, 2006). The mediated Westernized modernity shown in Korean Wave TV dramas demonstrates that modernization in Asia has been equally perceived as Westernization (Chua, 2004; Iwabuchi, 2008a). Furthermore, the Western model of capitalism becomes a primary standard for Asians to pursue life contentment, both individually and collectively (Ju, 2010).

Asian media and pop culture today reflect a more balanced media and cultural trading than in the 1990s in many aspects, including import/export quantities of media content and services (Kim & Kang, 2000). In the viewing patterns on Asian audiences, Asians are more inclined to watch love story based dramas rather than political ones as they prefer to watch the development of situations without having to positively be involved in the situation (Kim, 2004). As the culture practiced among Asians prefer more harmonized endings as compared to antagonism and frictions, the storylines for Korean TV dramas are also geared towards that culture. Even the story

line that presents competitiveness might be mixed with cooperation in the ending. This clearly shows that Asians do not really prefer storylines that focus on triumphs and sharp conflicts without values shown through dynamic turns.

There is a comparison study conducted by Fiske et al. (1998) to discover culturally patterned sociality and psyche between European-American and East Asia cultures. It was found that a person in the European-American context is seen as a set of internal, personal characteristics such as ability, talent, personality trait, preference, subjective feeling state, belief and attitude. Individually, everyone is defined as a self-governing, freely choosing and different individual striving towards attaining success and achievement. An assumption inherent in the individualistic U.S. culture is that the person endeavours primarily to feel good about him or herself (Fiske et al. 1998). On the other hand, the East Asian collectivist culture emphasises on building networks with people around, community, empathy, reciprocity, fidelity, respect and social obligations (Fiske et al., 1998). As a collectivist culture practices interdependent networks with others, social relationships, prescribed roles, group norms, and solidarity are deep-seated and more esteemed than self-expression. One is expected to the individual is expected to subordinate the self to meet others' expectations and to work for the benefits of the community, the institution, or the country (Trongmateerut & Sweeney, 2013).

Significantly, Korean Wave TV drama producers have been censoring unfavourable Western values, appropriately mingling Korea's traditional thoughts of the Confucian morals alongside the dominant modern images in many Asian countries (Chua, 2004; Lin & Tong, 2008). Korean television producers and their counterparts

are very skilful in their techniques of portraying contemporary, emotionally sensitive and stylish drama (Chua, 2004; Hanaki, et al., 2007; Ju, 2010).

Storylines attained from the traits of Asian culture anticipates program that promote more harmonized conclusions as compared to antagonism and friction. In fact, storylines that possess competitiveness would end with cooperation in order to show that *_bǎng_* Asians, values through dynamic turns of a story are much appreciated as compared to triumph in a sharp conflict. Furthermore, Asians prefer to calmly watch the development without involving in the situation making them to watch love stories as compared to political stories (Kim, 2004b).

There are possibilities that U.S programmers face issues coming from differences of culture between their country and Asia. Hofstede's multidimensional cultural index scores (2001) states that Asian cultures are commonly classified by high power distance, collectivism and long-term orientation as compared to the Americans which practice low power distance, individualism and short-term orientation. In some Asian countries, feminism, high-certainty avoidance and low-context cultures are formed as compared to the American culture (Hall, 1976; Oba, 2007).

After all been said, according to Wan (2006), "South Korea's government does not see the Korean wave just as a way of spreading its culture, but also wants it to represent the entire Asian culture" (as cited in Lee, 2011, p.90). This forceful stand comes from the belief in the widespread impact of the the Korean culture on the entire Asian region (Lee, 2011).

2.5.4 Cultural Proximity

The theory of cultural proximity can explain the reasons behind consumers' acceptance or rejection of programs (Straubhaar, 1991, 1997). Cultural proximity was considered a 'new factor' of importance (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Trepte, 2003) and the concept was applied to better understand the selection and enjoyment of television programs (Hoskin, McFayden & Finn, 1997; Straubhaar, 1991; Trepte, 2003). According to Trepte (2003), the term is useful for explaining buying decisions, and also media production and usage.

In essence, the term cultural proximity means "originating from the same country or region" (Lee et. al, 2002; Zaharopoulos, 1990); or as indicating "the way that people recognize themselves in local television" (as cited in Trepte, 2008). Straubhaar (1992), introduced the term 'cultural proximity' to media effects after its usage and discussion of content analysis (Galtung and Ruge, 1965). According to Straubhaar (1991), cultural proximity is a factor that is predominant in nationally or locally produced material that is closer to and more reinforcing of traditional identities, based in regional, ethnic, dialect/language, religious, and other elements" (Straubhaar, 1991: 51; Straubhaar et. al, 2003). Culturally proximate products are those that come from the same region, if demand for national programs cannot be met. For example, Latin America for Mexico, are also viewed as culturally proximate.

Likewise, media studies define cultural proximity as the choice of television program socially, culturally, historically, geographically, politically, economically, and linguistically (Singhal & Svenkerud, 1994 as cited in Hung et. al., 2011). Cultural

proximity promotes the existence of "geo-cultural markets" that are engaged through language, history, faiths, races, backgrounds, communication, fashions, living styles and climate (Straubhaar, 1997). Nonetheless, Hoskins and Mirus (1988) preferred "cultural discount" in describing how entertainment contents possess low value in foreign markets as compared to the local market (as cited in Ju, 2010). Cultural discounts happen when the programs have been dubbed and subtitled, so much that viewers find it difficult to identify "with the style, value, beliefs, history, myths, institutions, physical environment, and behavioural patterns of the material in question.

According to Ju (2010), cultural proximity explains the impact that transnational media content from a neighbouring geographic region or a similar region has on audiences residing in that particular region. In explaining the consumption of imported TV programs, audiences prefer more geo-culturally related programs over lesser ones. In his point of view, active audiences usually choose a content that is closer to them geographically and ones that are useful for them" (Straubharr, 1991, p. 42). Similarly, Sinclair (1996a, 1996b), included other factors that constitute cultural proximity in international media flow from a regional point of view that are more than languages. Aspects including clothing, non-verbal communication, humour, faiths, music and narrative style are also discovered to be the mediators for audience preferences (as cited in Ju, 2010).

Observers concur that South Korean shows, singers, and movies achieve popularity because of their cultural proximity and affinity with their neighbouring Asian countries. Thus, Lee (2011), in his article *The Korean Wave: The Seoul of Asia* have

cited Yang's (2009) observation that many academics and journalists have debated the reasons causing the powerful rise of Korean popular culture throughout Asia and speculated on its potential influence on the future of the region.

Kim (2004), however mentioned that the Korean trend was based on the similarities of culture, beliefs, practices, and social codes such as etiquette, laws, and rituals. Thus, the Korean wave phenomenon in Asia implicates cultural proximity, citing its significance in conducting business with customers from different countries. Amongst others, the rewards of cultural proximity include repeated business, loyalty, and aid provided during times of crisis (Kim, 2004).

It is interesting that the love of another country's culture and people was more important than the cultural differences between them. This suggests that, even if the culture and the country are dissimilar, consumers will still watch or purchase foreign television programs, because of their fondness of the foreign country, its culture and its people (Sora, 2004).

Kim (2004), who analysed "Cultural Proximity and the Type of Korean Television Programs in Asian Market" observed that the audience preferred programs with backgrounds, storylines and actors that they can identify with. According to The National Academy of Sciences (1999), proximity can be categorized into three; organizational, cultural and geographic. Firstly, organizational proximity can include membership in joint project terms or placing employees in one another's firms.

Second, cultural proximity, takes place over time and is usually a result of sharing common business practices, jargon, ethical standards, and language. It is vital in conducting international businesses involving varied countries and cultures. Some of the benefits of cultural proximity include repeated business, loyalty, and solution finding during times of crisis.

Third, geographic proximity may involve supplier facilities adjacent to Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) operations.

Thus, Kim concluded that Korean programs are preferred as Asians can empathize with Asian cultures that espouse family morals, high morality and love and sacrifice. In this context, asian audiences can assimilate the values and lifestyles depicted in the Korean programs which are also able to satisfy their emotional needs.

Chung (2006) who looked at the cultural proximity between Korean and Southeast Asian countries observed how Korean cultural products are embedded with cultural values. He stated that environmental factors and the cooperation or links that the countries had in the past also significantly influence the entry and acceptance of foreign cultural products. When cultural products are bought and sold between countries, cultural interaction and exchanges take place. In sum, it can be said that economic, political, and cultural proximities between countries will naturally provide a relatively easier entry and acceptance of foreign products.

Ju (2010), in his study, noted the reason for the popularity of Korean TV drama amongst middle-aged women in Japan is related to cultural proximity sentiments and emotions as well as a sense of nostalgia evoked in the dramas.

Besides, Shim (2010), noted that cultural similarities differentiated Korean dramas from Western ones as these similarities cannot be captured by American programs. Straubhaar (2003), explained the concept as "the tendency to prefer media products from one's own culture or the most similar possible culture", and is often applied in international contexts in explaining the appeal of foreign and domestic media.

Previous researchers also found that close regional culture has contributed to the success of Korean culture. As Rhoo (2007) wrote, "Regional cultural affinities also help explain this phenomenon in the sense that the success of the Korean Wave is closely related to the ability of South Korean culture and media to translate Western or American culture to fit Asian taste". Rhoo also added that "Western popular cultural artefacts will not likely succeed because of a certain non-negotiable cultural heterogeneity". In this light, therefore, Asian viewers can easily understand, empathize with, and accept South Korean popular culture.

The concept of cultural proximity can be used to explain the birth of regional media productions. For the content to resonate with the cultural make-up of viewers, both content and viewers must share the same 'cultural linguistic' (Straubhaar, 2003) or 'geolinguistic' space (Cunningham, Jacka, & Sinclair, 1998; Straubhaar, 2003). Advocates for this idea emphasize how language determines audiences' choices of

media products. As De Sola Pool (1997) as cited in Straubhaar (2003) noted, people prefer films produced in their own language than one with subtitles or dubbed.

But language is not the only determinant of cultural proximity as there are many more aspects to this concept. Straubhaar (2002) mentioned that cultural proximity reaches beyond language as it also involves history, religion, ethnicity and culture in several senses: shared identity, gestures and nonverbal communication; what is considered funny or serious or even sacred; clothing styles; living patterns; climate influences and other relationships with the environment.

In his qualitative study conducted in Brazil, Straubhaar had 228 in-depth interviews over a 10-year period which he finally discovered evidences of cultural proximity that were present from different level of cultural capital of various social classes (Straubhaar, 2003). He also discovered that there are various unique variables at play in determining cultural proximity including dress, ethnic types, gestures, body language, definitions of humour, ideas about story pacing, music traditions, religious elements, etc. (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005).

Cultural proximity literature places language preferences as its central theme. In a idealised context, viewers will naturally opt for programmes in the language that they speak or can identify with. Yet, besides language, there are various micro-level audience traits that be equally powerful in determining preferences. For instance, age corresponds with choices for news over entertainment, as well as other genres of television and music (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008). By this token, Straubhaar not only

highlighted 'cultural linguistic markets' (Straubhaar et. al, 2002) but also 'geocultural markets' as the basis for cultural proximity (Straubhaar, 2002).

Additionally, other factors include "gender images, lifestyle, knowledge about other lifestyles, values, education, family, personal and group networks, travel, religion, and organizational affiliations" (Straubhaar, 2001, 2003). There is also the factor of genre proximity to be considered (Obregon, as cited in Straubhaar, 2007). Genre proximity argues for familiarity with genres such as melodrama, which has influenced the success of telenovelas worldwide (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005; Straubhaar, 2007).

Cultural proximity is thus, a multi-dimensional and complicated concept, and can be likened to a multiple facets of the audience's identity. These include geographic, cultural, religious, and ethnic, just to name a few (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005; Straubhaar, 2007). It is complicated as these factors are intertwined language, thus, their exact roles are unclear. However, all assume that audiences will choose content that are culturally similar when faced with diverse media offerings.

Various researchers have adapted this concept in their studies, for instance, Straubhaar and colleagues' (2002) research on prime-time television schedules over a 40-year span provided "a reasonably accurate indication of what is most popular with the audience" (Straubhaar et. al, 2002). In essence, they discovered a 'new kind of cultural proximity' (p. 23), that comprises international trade patterns, migration, and geography, leads to a link with local, national, and regional media products.

As a result, Liebes and Katz (1990) of their qualitative have determined three factors of the success of television shows in different countries; ~~primordially~~”, meaning the availability of a program; ~~universality~~” of the problems and topics the show deals with; ~~polyvalence~~” of the program or the possibility to ascribe different meanings to one issue. Sinclair et al., (1996) claims that this is applicable to all telenovelas and other international fiction programs; in contrast to Dallas, people do not want to see those internationally (Havens, 2000).

Park and Hwang (2002) investigated the effects of cultural proximity on Korean television program imports and exports and concluded that television programs that address audiences’ cultural interests have higher chances of broadcast. They also developed other novel methods in measuring cultural proximity, for example, the flight time between Incheon International Airport in Seoul and the importing country’s capital city. They used variables such as flight time’, mutual migration’ and South Korea’s foreign investments’, to determine the patterns of television program exports. However, the import of television products could not be forecasted by this set of variables, because American products are much more present than products from other regional countries (Russell, 2002).

Schweiger and Brosius (2003) as cited in Trepte (2008) defined cultural proximity in the same way in their research on tele-voting behaviour of European Song Contest viewer where they found that the process is influenced by the audiences’ and singers’ backgrounds including geographic, politic, economic and cultural proximity. The researchers differentiate the geographical and cultural proximity (e. g., mutual membership with the European Union), and economic proximity (e. g., difference in

GDP in both countries, and cultural proximity (e. g., same native language). However, in the empirical study, tele-voting behaviour proved to be weakly linked to political and cultural proximity. The other variables could not explain any variance in the data.

Adams (1986) as cited in Trepte (2008), referring to the early work of Galtung and Ruge (1965), described cultural proximity from a journalist's perspective. He studied three social and cultural factors that linked leading journalists and U.S. citizens. These were "(a) the number of U.S. tourists visiting the country of interest, (b) the number of Americans who identify their ancestors (or parents or themselves) as coming from the country of interest, and (c) the proportion of leading journalists with ethnicity in common with the country of interest." Empirical estimates of the distance from New York City to the capital of the country of interest was regarded as the geographical proximity. This and the tourist inflow between countries determined the newsworthiness of a country.

In describing cultural proximity, four factors have been referred to: (a) geographical distance between the origin country of the television programs and the location they are exported to, (b) the exchange individuals including tourists or immigrants among these two locations, (c) the exchange of merchandise and goods, (d) similar systems politically and economically. It is obvious that these operationalisations have to act as the indicators to show the features of recipients and media contents as well as being non-doubtful to be utilized in empirical investigations. Nonetheless, these factors seem to work on a high degree of abstraction as compared to what they actually have to indicate. Hence, theoretical definitions of cultural proximity and

operationalisations are quite distinctive in nature. Cultural proximity involves all sorts of features related to communication including value, meanings and attitudes while operationalisations are basically hard facts; (Trepte, 2008).

In media studies, this concept explains the consumers' choice of television programs based on the social, cultural, historical, geographic, political, economic and linguistic dimensions of the program (Singhal & Svenkerud, 1994). These similarities promote the growth of "geocultural markets" that merge due "language, history, religion, ethnicity, shared identities, communication, clothing styles, living patterns, and climate" (Straubhaar, 1997). Similar to the concept of cultural proximity, Hoskins and Mirus (1988) applied the term "cultural discount" to describe why entertainment programs are less appreciated in foreign markets. The appeal is lessened as dubbing or subtitling makes it difficult for viewers to identify "with the style, value, beliefs, history, myths, institutions, physical environment, and behavioural patterns of the material in question" (Su et al., 2011).

Kim, (2004a) used the idea of a cultural frame to explain why foreign programs are chosen. This cultural frame is used by the sender to communicate whilst the receiver uses another cultural frame to interpret the message. Feedback is created by using this frame and when it reaches the original sender, it is also via the sender's frame. This communication is complicated and loaded with cultural currents (Kim, 2004a).

Therefore, the communication process is hindered by interference and leads to a consequential loss of meaning. This loss in meaning can be further aggravated through other possible distractors, leading to more miscommunication and

understanding (Brake et. al, 1995). The interference and distorted meanings are caused by the difference in cultural orientations. This is normal for those from differing culture blocs, unlike those who can understand each other better as they share the same culture.

Kim (2004a) explained the communication process as one based on a cultural paradigm. Accordingly, a cultural frame comprises eight factors: ethnocentrism, stereotypes, etiquette and nonverbal behaviour, time and place, topics, status and power, styles and language. 13 factors are further included to the paradigm in the international distribution of programs: population, economy, infrastructure, entry, marketing, geography, time, nonverbal language, genre, quality, subject, regulations and technology. In essence, these factors are related to variables of television program distribution, making it important for the sender and receiver or exporter and importer to focus on cultural frames for communication and distribution. The most common attributes of these two cultural frames are nonverbal communication, time and place, topic and style access.

Thus, the relationship between culture and marketing may be strengthened according to how much access the exporters have to the importing country's culture, in terms of nonverbal, time and place, topic and style. This is clearly illustrated in the factors influencing preference of Korean programs in Asian countries (Kim, 2004a).

2.5.5 Korean Cultural Proximity

Ryoo (2007) found that observers basically agree that the most likely explanations for the popularity of South Korean shows, singer, and movies throughout Asia

include South Korea's high income levels, the close cultural proximity and affinity they share with neighbouring Asian countries. Thus, Lee (2011) in his article *The Korean Wave: The Seoul of Asia* as cited in Yang (2009), that many scholars and journalists have questioned the reasons behind the emergence of Korean popular culture as a huge influence throughout Asia, speculating on its potential impact on the future of the region.

Kim (2004) believed that the influence comes from shared culture, beliefs, practices, and similar practical social norms-based on etiquette, laws, and rituals. He considers proximity, especially cultural proximity, as being vital in conducting business with international customers. Cultural proximity has several advantages, such as repeated business, loyalty, and assistance in problem solving during times of crisis (Kim, 2004).

It is interesting that preference for another country's culture and people was more important than how different that culture was thought to be. This suggests that, in order to consume products like foreign television programs, people need to "like" the originating country or people, always believe that country to be similar to their own (Sora, 2004).

Kim (2004) in his analysis of Cultural Proximity and the Type of Korean Television Programs in Asian Market revealed that in the case of television programming, the audience is familiar with programs that have a familiar background, story and actors. Kim also insists that according to The National Academy of Sciences (1999), proximity is divided into three parts.

First, organization proximity may have several types such as membership in joint project teams or the placement of employees in one another's facilities.

Secondly, cultural proximity, which typically evolves over time, can be achieved through the adoption of general business practices, jargon, ethical standards, and language. Cultural proximity is especially vital in dealing customers from various countries and cultures.

Thirdly, geographic proximity may include supplier facilities adjacent to Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) operations.

Thus, Kim concluded that preference for Korean programs showed empathy for Asian cultural norms including family moral value, highly morality and love & sacrifice. In other words, Korean programs are able to satisfy Asian emotional needs as they are easy to assimilate.

Studying cultural proximity between Korean and its Southeast Asian neighbours, Chung (2006) noted how cultural values are embedded in Korean cultural products. Besides, environmental factors and the historical relations between the countries also significantly facilitates the entry and acceptance of foreign cultural products. Furthermore, once there is an exchange of products, the economic, political, and cultural proximities between the participating countries will further facilitate the products' entry and acceptance.

Ryoo (2009), put forward the consensus that the most likely explanation for the popularity of South Korean shows, singers and movies throughout Asia include South Korea's income levels and the close cultural affinity they share with their neighbour countries.

Ju (2010) in his study of Glocalization Of Korean Popular Culture in East Asia: Theorizing the Korean Wave, has noted the success of Korean TV drama among middle-aged women in Japan is related to culture proximity in Korean drama emotion, the sentiment of Asians as well as the nostalgia featured in the drama.

On top of that, Shim (2010), added that having similar culture is what made the Korean different to the Western which is what cannot be presented by American programs. Straubhaar (2003), explained cultural proximity as “the tendency to prefer media products from one’s own culture or the most similar possible culture” which has been understood around the globe in order to comprehend the power of foreign and domestic media.

Previous researchers also found that close regional culture has contributed to the success of Korean culture. As Rhoo (2007) wrote, "Regional cultural affinities also help explain this phenomenon in the sense that the success of the Korean Wave is closely related to the ability of South Korean culture and media to translate Western or American culture to fit Asian taste". Rhoo also added that ~~“Western~~ popular cultural artefacts will not likely succeed because of a certain non-negotiable cultural heterogeneity”. Therefore, he suggested that South Korean popular culture is more readily relatable and accepted to Asian audiences.

Korean TV dramas are not only popular in Korea, but also in other Asian countries like China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and the Philippines. Iwabuchi (2009) suggests that the language plays a dominant role in cultural proximity. However, on the other hand, Moeran, eds (2001) as cited in Weber (2003, p.286) state that the acceptance of a programme is also affected by other cultural elements, such as religious, dress, music, nonverbal code, humour, story pacing and ethnic. The dramas are usually translated into the local language upon export to other countries. However, in Singapore, the dramas were translated into Mandarin as they were broadcasted on a Chinese network (Huang, 2009), catering to the more than 70% Chinese population, though its official language is English.

As mentioned earlier, cultural proximity works on different levels if compared to acceptance of popular culture such as Hollywood movies. The interest in culturally proximate products are different as Iwabuchi (2009) mentioned there are various cultural factors that affect audiences' acceptance such as humour. A Korean joke may evoke two different responses from a Chinese audience and an American audience. Furthermore, without cultural proximity, it may be difficult for Italians to understand why guests to a Japanese wedding do not wear flashy and vibrant colours (Huang, 2009).

Audience interpretations of television programmes are affected by race, nationality, class, age, and gender. Moeran (2001) as cited in (Huang, 2009) concludes that it is imperative that local needs, desires, preferences, and curiosities are addressed to ensure that the products are accepted. According to him, cultural artefacts include movies, TV shows, pop songs, and hamburgers.

Today, Korean TV dramas have replaced Japanese dramas in terms of popularity (Huang, 2009), reflecting the audience's acceptance based on cultural proximity.

2.6 Theoretical Perspective

Research on mass communication commonly believes that media and their content possess substantial impacts on viewers where television has emerged as the main source of information since the past few decades. Despite the advancement in technology that introduces the Internet and mobile, television is still the main source of news dissemination that is favoured by the public (Gerbner, 2002; The Pew Research Centre for the People & the Press, 2011; Vu, 2011).

It was not a surprise to discover that the most studied topic related to media is on television effects (Livingstone, 1998) where scholars have methodologically established numerous models in studying the effects of television. As for this study, the theoretical study of Korean media strategy is viewed from the Cultural Proximity standpoint.

According to Straubharr (1991, 1996), the cultural proximity theory illuminates existing regional media stream, and is defined as how the programs from nearby regions or a similar one is able to exercise more influence on audiences from a particular region. In viewing imported TV programs, audiences favoured more geo-culturally related content, "[the active audiences are] tending to prefer and select local or national cultural content that is more proximate and relevant to them" (Straubharr, 1991, p. 42; Ju, 2010)

Sinclair (1996a, 1996b) suggested that the factors influencing transnational media flow between countries goes beyond languages. Specifically, he pointed to the role played by other factors including costumes, nonverbal communication, humour, religion, music and narration style have been found to mediate audience preferences. Cunningham et al. (1998) and Ju (2010), explained that audiences will first seek the pleasure of recognition of their own culture in their program choices, and programs will be produced to satisfy this demand, relative to the wealth of the market. In a way, the audiences are always in favour or easily influenced of a program that close to their own culture.

According to Straubharr (1991, 1996), when audiences read foreign texts selected from a range of other imported programs, cultural proximity factors actively engage regional audiences and this makes them attracted to the content. Thus, they can simply identify with and fathom the traditional elements as incorporated the imported program. Conversely, programs that are less culturally recognizable produces dissatisfaction and less interest, especially those programs that come from a radically dissimilar culture (Sinclair, 1997). In short, the theory of cultural proximity explains the reasons why local audiences select certain imported content. (Ju, 2010)

Although the theory demonstrates the significant influence of cultural similarities, yet functional similarities such languages, styles, values, and communicative patterns are not effective predictors of the programs selected. In fact, the most significant predictors appear to be knowledge and analogous sensibility that are embedded deep in "cultural ties, such as structural social similarities involved in texts, images,

meaning systems, structure of feeling (Williams, 1961), and the feelings of contemporariness" (Ching, 2000; Iwabuchi, 1998, 2002; Lee, D. H., 2004; Ju, 2010).

Sinclair (1996a, 1996b) mentioned above that cultural proximity can be summarized as language similarities, the state of trade and telecommunications, and emigration or immigration (Chon, 2002). These indices illustrate a cultural mix and diffusion by interaction in the networking community or country. Though this view picks on the variables that exist in a trading market, it ignored the particular characteristics of cultural products and consumer behaviour. This study takes a closer look at these aspects and the type of programs that appeal to Asians more, based on their cultural proximity.

In order to discover how proximity influences actual patterns of audience behaviour, it is important to understand the effect of macro-level factors in a setting where media materials from various languages are abundant and available for viewers at all times. For this purpose, broadcast media would be an ideal type. Further, since audience availability circumscribes individual program options and hence program ratings considering audience's behaviour over broad day parts would afford the clearest look at the effect of cultural proximity.

2.6.1 Theory of Cultural Proximity: previous studies

It can be reiterated that the cultural proximity theory has relevance to regional viewers whose interests in foreign products are increased due to their inherent cultural similarities. Ju (2010) argued, however, these functional similarities (i.e. language, value, style, and communicative patterns) cannot effectively predict the

selection of any particular program. To this, Staubharr (1991) noted that the main attraction factor still remains to be the deeper understanding of content that is familiar and that the audience is comfortable with.

The use of cultural proximity theory is evident in many previous studies. Burch (2002) studied the effects of culture on the aesthetic choices made in television production. In examining the spin on the soap opera model, i.e religious soap operas in India; Ramayan, he looked at three aspects of the issue. Firstly, he examined the aesthetic difference between Indian religious soap operas and the established professional standards within the USA. Secondly, the study examined the success of Ramayan, not only in India where it was produced, but also in Nepal and multiple Hindu diasporic communities worldwide. Thirdly, it investigated whether Ramayan counters media imperialism. Consequently, he decided to study on colors and sound on Ramayan. He conducted a qualitative, aesthetic analysis of the first episode of Ramayan and found that the audiences are attracted to Ramayan epic due to the closeness to their own real lives. In fact, the Ramayan visuals in terms of colour as well as language and sound created proximity to Hindu interest.

Hung et al. (2011) examined the effects of Korean TV dramas on the Taiwanese audiences' attitudes toward South Korean tourist destinations (onscreen locations) that they perceive as culturally similar. Three perspectives differentiated this study from prior research. Firstly, product placement was deployed to determine how television dramas may make onscreen locations more appealing as travel destinations. Secondly, this study involved a cross-cultural setting. Lastly, this study builds on the work of Russell and Stern (2006) by incorporating cultural proximity

theory into the balance theory, in explaining the moderating effects of Korean TV dramas on Taiwanese audiences. Based on quantitative methods, the study results were consistent with prior literature that highlighted cultural similarities as the basis for attraction (Burch, 2002; Straubhaar, 1991; Su & Chen, 2000) and as effective persuasive techniques (Janis et al., 1965) as cited in Hung et. al. (2011), so that the characters in the Korean dramas come across credibly. The reasoning is such that if the featured locations are liked by the characters, which are similar to the viewers, then the viewers also are inclined to like the featured locations. Cultural proximity, thus, is a key factor in determining the strength of the effects.

The development of new Asian markets for Korean programs is paving the way for cultural marketing and researchers such as Kim (2004), who applied the concept of cultural proximity, have conducted studies on these trends. Some studies also used the cultural frame to determine the types of programs favoured by Asians, and proved the Korean programs' ability to satisfy the emotional needs of Asians. The favored Korean programs emphasize the Asians' empathy for Asian culture frames especially in relation to family values, high morality, love and sacrifice. Additionally, this study analyses the characteristics of the most popular Korean programs in Asia using five categories i.e. harmony, tension, compromise, participation and agreement. The results showed that Asians share a similar culture frame and favour stories dealing with love, harmony, tensions in daily life, low participation and reinforcement of their traditional values (Kim, 2004).

Sora (2004) however view that the interests and preferences of the output of certain country is crucial in the process of acceptance of a product. In his survey of Chinese

consumption of Korean television programs indicates that people who are fond of a cultural product's originating country and who also think they have a lot in common with that country and its culture consume more of its cultural products. Interestingly, actual exposure to the foreign country and people does not significantly affect enjoyment of that country's cultural products. This suggests that, in order to consume products such as foreign television programs, people need to "like" the originating country or people, rather than actually believe that country to be similar to their own. The results show that the average proximity variable was not significant, but allow us to cautiously conclude that the relative proximity had positive effects on the consumption of Korean culture. People who were more open to foreign countries did not necessarily watch more Korean dramas, but people who consumed more Korean dramas perceived Korea as more similar to China than are the other eight countries. People who thought Korean culture similar to Chinese culture watched more Korean dramas. The direction of the variables is clearer in this case (Sora, 2004).

Heo's (2002) study of Chinese college students found that their acceptance of Korean media was because the storylines incorporated Confucian morals, modern Asian life, and stunning cinematographic images. Similarly, Yoo and her colleague (2001) conducted a study using the "Cultural proximity", which involved East Asian audiences (Straubhaar, 1991) theory that is based on Confucian socio-cultural legacy. They surmised that this theory enabled the East Asian television viewers to understand and accept Korean content. In short, these studies reinforced the importance of cultural proximity in Korean media consumption by broader Asian audiences.

In conclusion, despite clarifications and prior research on the Korean wave, these fail to explain the proactive measures and responsibilities undertaken by Korean media, especially in relation to the success of Korean drama in Malaysia. Therefore, this study emphasises and focuses on the role and strategies of Korean media in promoting the Korean dramas. In addition, this study will also look at the duties and responsibilities of the media in popularizing their dramas as well as to maintain the existing popularity in the eyes of the world.



CHAPTER THREE

BACKGROUND

3.0 Korean History

This chapter will look at the background that led to the popularity of Korean wave. In addition, the development of Korean drama to foreign country will be touched and understood through previous study.

Since the 1960s, South Korea, now known as the Republic of Korea, has experienced great political changes and developed into a major trading nation. Many changes have occurred in the last century, with the end of the Korean dynasty, 36 years of Japanese colonial rule and the separation of North and South Korea, besides civil wars amongst its people (Paik, 2001).

With its 5000 years of history, Korea has experienced turbulent times in the 20th century. The nation suffered at the hands of Japanese colonialism lasting over 35 years when the Koreans were being turned Japanese. After colonialism was quickly the Korean War began and this devastated much of the nation's economic and social infrastructure.

The beliefs and values of the Korean people are based on Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, adopted from China in the fourth century AD. The official religion is Buddhism which highlights on positive relationships, respect for family members, loyalty and building spiritual beliefs of the individual while Confucianism emphasizes on moral, relationships, piousness of family as well as encourages the worship of ancestors.

However, although Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism have been embedded in Korea's culture and beliefs, they are not prevalent as they used to be. Currently, Christianity is the most dominant religion in the country. In the modernization history of South Korea, Christianity contributes a major role to it where almost half of religious followers there embrace Christianity in the midst of its traditional Confucianism and Buddhism practices (Song, 1997 as cited in Paik, 2001).

Korea's hierarchical culture consists of a complex rule for speech and conduct. According to Paik (2001), the Korean culture emphasises functional roles that are associated with different positions as opposed to self-reliance and self-determination. As opposed to Western culture, the status of a person in Korea determines his presumed ability and competence.

3.1 South Korean Economy

In rebuilding their nation, Korea has been presented with many challenges. Paik (2011) suggested that one major challenge was that only one-fifth of its land is arable in the southwest. The nation lacks natural resources and heavily depends on imports of oil, iron ore, copper, gold, and silver. The only raw materials are tungsten, limestone, and lead besides water which generates hydroelectric power. Agriculture remains the main source of income for 5 million populations (California Department of Education, 1992 as cited in Paik, 2001).

After the Korean War, the Koreans started rebuilding and re-establishing the political, economic and social pillars of the country. These efforts paid off and in the 1990s, South Korea had progressed beyond what Ingelhart (1999) termed as the

inclination "to emphasize economic growth at any price". Jang and Paik (2012) singled out two events that paved the way for South Korea and the future possibility for the Korean Wave; firstly, the 1988 approval for Hollywood to distribute movies directly to theatres, and the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis (Jang & Paik, 2012).

South Korean's economy has witnessed a lot of improvement. In 1953, the per capita income represented 1% of the Organization of Economic and Comparative Development (OECD) average, but grew to be almost one-third of that average (OECD, 1998) in 1992. Besides, South Korea is now the 11th largest trading country and major exporters of electronics, cars, clothing, petrochemicals, machinery, ships, and steel (Hwang, 1993; Song, 1997). It is also the United State's seventh largest trading partner with exports amounting to 35% (California Department of Education, 1992). The economy achieved the highest growth rate globally since 1980 (Song, 1997), and has exceeded its rivals such as Taiwan, challenging both the United States and Japan (Ellinger & Beckham, 1997; Paik, 2001).

Korea's cultural industries have also generated significant revenues. Its exports to Asian markets began in the late 1990s and ventured beyond Asia in the 2000s. The nation reported a 553% growth in total export revenue by the Korean cultural industries, from USD 658 million to USD 4.3 billion between 2001 and 2011 (MCT 2002a, MCST 2012). Since the late 1990s, Korean television dramas have taken up prime airing times on major Asian broadcasting stations (Lin and Tong 2008, KOCCA 2010). There was also a substantial growth in the total export revenue of the Korean broadcasting industry, rising from USD 5.5 million in 1995 to USD 222.3 million in 2011 (MCT 2002a, MCST 2012) as cited in Kwon and Kim (2013).

In 1997 Korean media products' exports totalled US\$1 million. This total soared to US\$8 million in only for two years and reached US\$29 million in 2002, a record year for reason that media product exports exceeded imports for the first time in history (the ratio of exports to imports was 1:0.87). Korean dramas account for the majority of Korea's media product exports (76.8% in 2002), and are sent mainly to China, Taiwan, Japan, and Hong Kong. Request for Korean dramas is also growing rapidly in countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia (Sora, 2004).

Though Korean media have undeniably garnered some recent success, it still occupies a relatively marginal position in the terrain of the international economy of cultural goods and services. In the 2009 United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report, Korea ranked seventeenth according to the size of its exports of cultural goods and services. Traditional cultural powerhouses such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, and Germany ranked highest. Korea was also outranked in tourism by several other Asian nations, such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Japan (UNESCO 2009). Therefore, Nam (2013), decided that from these statistics that the Korean Wave is more of a rhetorical or symbolic force than a real economic success.

Nam (2013) mentioned that the reason why Korean Wave does not sell was due to the fact that it challenges the norm of globalization yet clearly Korean Wave possesses its own relevance, objectives and enjoyments. It was also partly due to the nature of Korean Wave which only develops a mutual cultural space containing certain values of the Asians but it is apparent that its popularity has been globally

accepted and relevant. Hence, the Korean Wave contains the qualities of continuity and shift in the complicated and sophisticated cultural globalization (Nam, 2013).

3.2 Korean Government

Korean production companies proved that they did not single-handedly worked on their own. As Kim (2007), suggested, although the private sectors were responsible for the launch of the Korean Wave, the government also played a key role in its growth. According to Kim (2007), "a systematic political infrastructure set by the government and institutional strategies developed by the industry have combined to produce the preconditions for the rise of the Korean Wave."

The government has supported the Korean media industry, and during his reign President Kim Dae-jung, the President of Culture (1998–2003), introduced legislation to aggressively promote the cultural industries (MCT, 2002). The Kim-Dae-Jung's assisted in the development of digitalization and international growth of Korean's products of culture with specific highlights on its dramas, films, music and online games (MCT 2002a, MCST 2010b) as cited in Kwon and Kim (2013).

President Kim Dae-jung was also instrumental in placing the nation at the forefront, promoting and selling the Korean cultural products. He introduced the Basic Law for the Cultural Industry Promotion in 1999, allocating \$148.5 million to this project. With an increased budget of 0.55 per cent for the cultural sector in 2002, (from 484.8 billion Won to 1,281.5 billion Won), it enabled Korean cultural products to be exposed in larger markets, and thus attracting foreign buyers. As a result of the financial and policy support from the government for example, the Busan

International Film Festival has evolved into one of the biggest international film festivals and the most significant marketplace for Korean and other Asian films (Kim, 2011).

Such policies were continued during the Lee Myung-bak's administration (2008–2013). Keri (2009) stated that the "Lee government also continued to emphasise the convergence of key strategic industries for their mutual development and created favourable business environment for growth through vertical integration." After the global financial crisis hit Asia in 2008, the government focused on the activity of exporting in order to create an international trade surplus which may allow the global expansion of these sectors (Kwon 2010; Kang 2012; Lee 2012; Kwon & Kim, 2013).

It was in the 1980s, that the South Korean government began to recognise the need to develop and promote popular culture. Prior to this, the Koreans perceived Western culture to be more superior than theirs; but after going through various changes in cultural policy, from restriction to promotion, Korean pop culture developed for the better and began to satisfy local people's tastes. Change in the government's attitude and recognition of the importance of promoting pop culture led to improved quality in the entertainment industry's output (Sung, 2010).

The ripple effect of developments made in the industries of culture including films and dramas, games, animations and musics cannot be underestimated. Due to the media industry's reliance on the latest developments in electronics and ICT, developments within the media and cultural industries began to stimulate and

promote inventions and innovations of new products in the development of Korea's electronical and ICT-based industries (Kwon & Kim, 2013)

The sectors that showcase the efforts to gain potential growth especially films, television dramas, games and music were given full support in terms of financial and governmental assistance so that they could engage in business activities and also via quasi-governmental organisations with collaborated with the non-governemntal organizations (Baek, 2009). There was also much collaboration made with various bodies especially the ICT and digital media organizations, such as providing financial and institutional assistance so that firms can experience the current electronical devices used in the media including Korean manufactured televisions, computers and mobile phones (KOCCA, 2012).

The Kim Dae-jung government also launched the Media Contents Centre as part of its efforts to "create an internationally competitive and innovative technological infrastructure" (MCT, 2002b). Similarly, the government made it compulsory for the minimum hourly broadcasting of programmes that are digitally developed in order to assist the growth of digital production of television products (Kwon & Kim, 2013).

Other important developments include the government's shift from a stringent censorship and political control authority to actively promoting these cultural sectors as vital elements for Korean economic development. Political changes resulting from a new democratic government in 1993, and social changes brought on by the emerging middle class group which demand for cultural products which are more quality and fresh, translated into significant changes in government policies for the

cultural industries. There was also a spill over effect as government support was consequently given in terms of invention of new products related to the ICT and latest electronical industries. Essentially, the government's involvement at numerous phases of development in the industries of culture ensured industry infrastructure could support the skills and knowledge development of the workforce whilst providing support to firms expanding into international cultural markets (Kwon & Kim, 2013).

The South Korean government regards the Korean Wave as a soft tool that has the power of enhancing the nation's international profile. Without much strategic hard power resources (i.e. military or economic capacity), it was vital for South Korea to develop soft power tools to achieve specific political or economic goals. The Asian Financial Crisis further compelled the government to actively seek economic opportunities through the Korean Wave phenomenon that had rapidly taken off. These developments sealed the South Korean government commitment to its domestic cultural industry (Kim, 2011)

At the beginning of the Korean Wave, the government was targeting at exporting its culture of popularity as a current initiative for economy where it was also a part of the plan to tackle the 7% plunge in its GDP caused by the Asian Financial Crisis (Kim, 2011).

As a part of the planning to maintain long-term stability of the Korean Wave, the Korean leadership was aware of the need to highlight of developing environment that is conducive and attractive for non-governmental entrepreneurs. Due to this, they

formed the “Korean Wave Policy Consultation Committee” consisting only academicians and private experts in order to notify the government on the progress and issues faced by the cultural industry at ground level. Firms that export Korean culture abroad was also granted millions dollar grants from the government. Economically, the strategy proved to be successful as illustrated by the \$3 billion entertainment exports in 2009, which more than doubled the 2002 exports. (Kim, 2011)

Although earlier on, Kim (2011) attested that it seemed too early to claim the success of the government’s interventions in making Korean pop culture as a soft power tool (especially in the face of challenges faced in China), there is evidence to show that South Korea has successfully established itself as a media powerhouse in East and South Asia. This resulted from the government’s decision to rebrand the national image by re-launching the Korean wave and using it as the nation’s soft power in competing more effectively in twenty-first-century global society. The eventual circulation of the Korean wave in neighbouring countries resulted in the success of the entertainment industry and was a vital tool in enhancing the image of the nation.

3.3 Korean Drama in Foreign Countries

Based on the history and the development of the Korean wave, is also a need to understand more on the development of Korean wave to the next level; which are neighbours countries. In this next discussion will focus on Korean dramas in the countries that close to Korea like China, Taiwan and Japan.

The term 'Korean Wave' is used to define the emerging popularity of South Korean's culture in Asia which was initiated by the exporting of their dramas such as ~~Winter Sonata~~ "Winter Sonata". As these dramas became highly popular, the spill-over impacts generated interest over their movies, music and celebrities (Ryoo, 2009).

There have been findings coming from cultural commentators which addressed a sudden increase of tourists from East Asian as a result of the dramatic television dramas such as Winter Sonata and Great Jang-Geum and their celebrities. This situation is deemed to happen due to viewers' heightened interest and preferences over the Korean celebrities and their television programmes including films, dramas and songs (Lee et al., 2008).

Interestingly, each Asia country had a different perspective on the Korean wave although they shared a common, initial reaction. This can be explained such that "each country has a different ethos, and based on this, its audience decodes and responds to cultural products in different ways" (Kim, 2007, p. 24). For example, Daejangguem received the best reception in Taiwan whilst Korea Herald was most liked in Japan (Kim, 2007, p. 24). Soon after, the wave spread out from the mainland to Taiwan, Hong Kong, affecting ethnic Chinese in other Asian countries and eventually Japan. Hence, viewers from these countries became more fascinated by Korean music and drama, its films, food and fashion. It can be said that Korean cultural products became a catalyst for worldwide interest about Korea and its culture. Specifically, Korean dramas served as an important bridge for different countries to experience the Korean culture (Lee, 2011).

Yang (2008) claims that Korean dramas are a model of successful local products that create incomes from its international markets which also contribute to the country's competitiveness in the international economy. As a result of the plans and support given by the government, the popularity of Korean dramas is translated into the image of "a mature cultural industry" with "integrated promotional strategy" (Yang, 2008).

Previously, Kim (2007), pointed out a question as to why has the Korean wave been able to take off as dramatically at this point as South Korea was once being under colonisations or overshadowed by foreign powers for a few centuries. In fact, the Asian region has been influenced by the products coming from the Western and Japan thus the sudden emergence of Korean Wave's popularity has caused a surprise (Kim, 2007).

Another important economic explanation to the rise of the Korean wave is the media privatization that swept across Asia in 1990s (Kim, 2011). This saw private broadcasting firms favouring cheaper, quality products like Korean dramas over American or Japanese ones. Notably, the expansion of South Korea's electronics like Samsung and LG played a role in popularizing Korean dramas as these firms distributed free copies to Asian broadcasting stations as part of their initiatives to promote their own electronic products in the mid-1990s.

In terms of the Korean television content export in 2010, 53.9 percent of Korean television content was sold to Japan, 13.2 per-cent of television content was sold to Taiwan and 8.8 percent was traded with China (Kuwahara, 2014). To better

understand why the Korean dramas are in demand in these countries, the next section discusses the sudden craze for Korean cultural products in China and Japan, Taiwan and other foreign countries.

3.3.1 China

As in other Asian countries, Korean TV dramas launched the Korean Wave in China in the mid-1990s. However, this also followed a reaction to the successful Asian Games held in Beijing in 1995. Following the games, the Chinese people began to turn towards Asia for cultural inspiration after years of Western-led entertainment (Cho et al., 2003; Changsun Pak, 2010; Hogarth, 2013).

Basically, according to Kim (2016), the first Korean drama in China was *„Jildi‘* (Jealousy) was imported in 1993 and was screened on CCTV- the official state TV. This followed by the Korean drama 'What is Love' which was screened on CCTV8 in the year of 1997. Since then, the Korean dramas had grown in popularity among Chine people and gaining an audience rating of 4.2% (Kim, 2016).

Scholars have offered several explanations as to why Korean dramas are so well received in Asian countries. One argument focuses on the historical and political changes in Asian countries. Traditional dramas in China either have historical themes or are simplified versions of American soap operas. The "trendy" dramas from Japan and Korea, however, have new formats and deal with new topics (Iwabuchi, 2000). China's recent open policy towards the import of foreign culture has paved the way for Korean TV shows to enter the Chinese market. Once they arrived, they were well received by Chinese audiences as the cultural proximity between China and Korea

allowed Chinese audiences to appreciate the freshness of Korean programming (Sora, 2004).

Just like the mainland China's soap operas, the phenomenon of Korean Wave is directly a transnational sociocultural situation in the Asian countries even though the early stage of it showed a relatively passive consumption among other countries. However, due to serious and continuous stage, Korean Wave has caused people around these countries to start collecting items related to Korean cultures, learning its language, trying out the food and finally visiting Korea (Lee, Scott, & Kim, 2008).

Based on a survey on Chinese's habit of watching Korean TV programs, it was found that audience prefer to collect cultural products of Korea as they would regard that as having some connection with the country. Hence, it was concluded that individuals' perception of Korea, Koreans and its culture would determine the consumptions of its cultural products.

Sora (2004) in his study on China's Consumption of Korean Television Dramas: An Empirical Test of the "Cultural Discount" Concept, presented the result that actual exposure to the foreign country and people did not significantly affect enjoyment of that country's cultural products. He argued that it is interesting that the desire to prefer culture of other countries and their people was more crucial to consider as compared to see how different that culture was thought to be. Therefore, Sora (2004) suggested in order consuming products like foreign television programs, people need to "like" the originating country or people rather than believe that country to be similar to their own.

Historically, in the late 1970s, China's reformed policy by Deng Xiaoping has been able to transform the country economically, politically and culturally. As a result, mass media has become the center of these transformations. However, like many other countries, China still heavily regulates the broadcasting sector by only allowing 20% of foreign programs into the country and prohibited direct foreign investment. Fast forward to few decades later, the new China's open media policy has allowed more foreign productions from over 23 countries including Taiwan, Japan, U.S, and the U.K to enter the market. In this case, the involvement of Korean drama is no exception. According to Sora (2004), the influx of Korean dramas in China was initially triggered by the popular Korean drama *'Sarang-i mwogillae'* (What on Earth Is Love?) in 1994. By this time, Korea has progressively been able to be among the major exporting countries together with U.S and Japan (Sora, 2004).

Besides the factor open media policy, 359 Korean shows were broadcasted between 2003 and 2004 in China, with Korean dramas have proving to be among the favourite TV programme. This number accounted for a quarter of all foreign productions broadcasted in the country (China Daily, 2005). There were at least 24 Korean TV dramas were aired on China television in September 2000 alone (Kim, 2011) of which has shown continuous demand since then. This happens as a result of excellent financial and policy intervention from the government of South Korea, as well as the fast developing base of Chinese fans (Tuk, 2012).

The success of Korean TV dramas in the Chinese market facilitated the entry of Korean television dramas into the Chinese and Taiwanese media market, and have successfully gained attention from local viewers Chua, 2004; Heo, 2002). The

Chinese market also played a substantial part in the Korean TV dramas' growth to many other audiences within the culture block of Southeast Asia such as Malaysia and Singapore (Ju, 2010)

As Korea's leading trading partner, China and Korea's bilateral trade is forecasted to achieve \$100 billion towards the end of the year where South Korea's top companies are starting to become a significant entity in the Chinese market as well as resulting in the escalating popularity of Korean soap operas viewers in China.

A study by Heo (2002) on Chinese college students investigated on their responses and participation in the Korean's media. In this study, it was found that the young Chinese viewers preferred the Korean media as it represents interesting storylines including values from Confucianism as well as the lives of modern Asians and intriguing audio-visual images used.

Due to that, Kim (2016) says in the same year of 2002, there were 67 Korean dramas appeared on Chinese screens. Among the most popular and representative was 'Autumn in My Heart' which was screened on 21 TV channels in China. The actors Seung-Heon Song, Hye-Kyo Song and Bin Won were fast accumulated a huge following in Chinese fans. Another famous drama 'Dae Jang Keum' was exclusively imported and shown on Hunan TV in 2005, and was the top-ranked program in terms of program rating Kim (2016).

Ju (2011), noted that China regards the Korean TV dramas are a crucial aspect in determining strong bilateral and trade relationship with Korea. In addition, Ju

claimed that the Korean dramas in China represent mutual emotional values as well as strengthening a great Confucius sensibility in a holistic manner (Yoo & Lee, 2001). Such modest storylines that are shown in Korean dramas have become one of the main reasons for them to be aired in China with only minor censorship. Besides that, both China and Korea possess a resemblance in terms of beauty standards which in return generates more interest among viewers in China (Ju, 2011).

Jiang and Leung (2012) conducted an exploratory study on a sample of 455 internet users in urban China. Based on their findings, it was discovered that there are various types of narrative appeals identified by the Chinese audience when they watch dramas from America and Korea. It was found that preference towards Korean dramas is higher as they are seen as to have a slower pace, lengthy storylines with simpler and more relaxed plots as well as homogenous in drama type as compared to the American dramas which are more intense, diverse, complicated, and fast-paced (Jiang & Leung, 2012). In addition, the study also discovered that dramas from these two countries contain distinct and uneven bipolar narrative appeal where the Korean dramas are more mature yet homogenous in style as compared to the American's which are diversified and dynamic.

Another finding from the study also highlighted that the celebrities of Korean drama and films are regarded as Hollywood stars among the young Chinese viewers where they serve as an exemplary in their fashion and western-style look. With the coming of these more desirable Korean TV idols, the Chinese population have imitated them and turned away from the Hollywood appearance (Chua, 2004; Lee D. H., 2004; Kim H. M., 2005; Ju, 2011).

In conclusion, Ju (2011) describes the emergence of Korean Wave there is a mature culture of pop and concludes that "Especially in China, the first version of the Korean Wave, positive or negative, functioned to fill in the culturally empty space left by enormous changes that swept through China in 1990" (Cho, 2005, p. 163).

3.3.2 Taiwan

The greatness of Korean wave has gladdened the hearts of Taiwan audiences. Since early 2000, many Taiwanese have begun to prefer a TV show that is regarded as a fresh, stylish and able to convey the sentiment and Asia. More and more Taiwan viewers are aware of choose to watch Korean movies, Korean popular music listening, watching Korean soap opera, and also travel to Korea to visit places they have seen on their favourite media (Sung, 2010).

According to Sung (2010), in Taiwan, Korea had not seemed notable or attractive and people in Taiwan had long favoured Japanese pop culture. Previously, Taiwan was involved in the cultural flow among major Chinese-speaking areas, including Hong Kong, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Singapore. Taiwan has played a leading role in East Asia. Unlike Japan and Hong Kong, Taiwan already has exchange pop culture Asia for centuries in Asia. Taiwan essentially have a negative impression of South Korea, especially after 1992, when South Korea broke off diplomatic relations with Taiwan and establish a new relationship with mainland China. The memory of this seeming betrayal began to change after the Korean Wave started to boom. This assertion is supported by Yeon (2010), in his study of "constructing a new image; Hallyu in Taiwan", based on ethnographic research,

found that the image of South Korea among the Taiwanese changed dramatically after Korean wave struck.

According to Sung (2010), the Korean entertainment program has attracted the attention of Taiwan ahead of TV drama. Beginning in 1999, the Taiwanese were attracted to Korean popular culture due to the popularity of Korean duo dance group CLON. The duo's performances managed to present South Korean popular music as interesting and enjoyable. It was easy to dance too and provided 'easy listening'- which was attractive enough to the Taiwanese, even if they did not understand the lyrics (Sung, 2010).

Initially, channel GTV (which was founded in 2000) in Taiwan is the first to deliver the Korean TV drama. However, with the sudden popularity of the program Korea, other Taiwan TV stations such as FTV, CTV, TV power, E-Phil has also started airing Korean dramas (Mee, 2005).

Beginning from 1999 to 2004, Taiwan emerged as one of the top consumers of Korean TV dramas by consumer a larger number of Korean media than China. In fact, unlike others neighbour countries (such as Japan and China) which decreased demand for the production of Korean wave, Taiwan on the other hand has demonstrated high demand in Korean wave. Resurrection in Taiwan not only affects popular music and television dramas, but spread to food, fashion, internet games and also Korean (Sung, 2010).

According to Yeon (2008), Asian production companies preferred Korean media products in the initial stage of Korean Wave due to their affordable culture including

music, TV dramas and movies. This is also recognized by Sung (2010) he noted, Korean wave owes its establishment to the liberal media which was very powerful all over Asia in the 1990s. According to Sung, due to the Asian economic crisis, Asians chose to purchase media products from Korea as they were way cheaper as compared to products from Japan and Hong Kong. In fact, Sung added, based to the Straits Times article (2003) suggests that, the Korean TV dramas in the year 2000 were four times and ten times cheaper than dramas from their Japanese and Hong Kong counterparts, respectively. Therefore, not surprising, Taiwanese entertainment industry also begins importing other elements of Korean popular culture, and these imports became the basis of the Korean wave phenomenon in Taiwan.

Apart from the lower prices, Sung (2010) found that there is another force that attracts Taiwanese viewers to continue to be interested in the Korean drama elements is the “East Asian Sentiment” of the Taiwanese. The mutual sense of East Asian identity shared between Korea and Taiwan has become one of the reasons for the Taiwanese viewers to prefer Korean TV dramas and pop music videos. The values and sentiments depicted in Korean soap operas are more acceptable than those in Western productions as the former are also derived from Confucianism. They reflect the actual lives of Asians including filial values as well as respect for the elderly. In essence, the Taiwanese are able to empathise with the Koreans as a result of their shared core cultural values (Sung, 2010).

Besides, success of Korean dramas in Taiwan has actually opened up new opportunities. According to, Sang (2010), the preference of Korean pop culture among Taiwanese viewers is way beyond the attractions possessed by the Korean

cultural products. In other words, the Taiwanese do not only adore the success of Korean entertainment industry but they also want to emulate it. As a result, Taiwanese are motivated to discover their own cultural products as well as devising plans on how they are able to position and market the products globally (Sung, 2010).

In 2004, Taiwan emerged as the top consumer of Korean dramas and they were accounted for the second largest group of tourists to South Korea (Korea National Tourism Organization, 2005) hence Korean dramas became smash hits in Taiwan despite being replete with Korean culture and history (Kang, 2004).

Yeon (2008) further mentioned that the Korean pop culture has increase the number of Taiwanese tourists to Korea and has motivated them to learn about various aspects of Korea including history, economic, language and culture. Yeon found that, according to the Korea Foundation for Asian Culture Exchange (KOFACE) website, the many Taiwanese are interested in learning the Korean language and their numbers are also rising. According to the cultural language centre in Wen Hua University (Cultural University) in Taiwan, 1,200 a year are learning Korean compared to the 800 learning Japanese. Additionally, Korean fashion, food and electronic goods have also become popular in the country and Yeon stated that some Taiwanese even travel to Korea to get surgery done there.

The Asian media argued that the Korean wave is not bilateral, in terms of cultural exchange but rather, its one-way influx of Korean pop culture emphasizes the imbalance of cultural industry in the Asian region (Kim, 2007, p. 109). According to

the Korea Herald "the Taiwanese government is considering a ban on the broadcast of foreign dramas prime time, a measure that seems to be directed against popular Korean dramas" (Kim, 2006, p. 2). Similarly, the Chinese media started to initiate a mutual and trustful tie with Korea and other Asian countries for them to gain the Korean Wave (Lee, 2011).

As the pop culture from Korea became a smash hit in Taiwan, the number of Taiwanese visitors to South Korea has gradually increased as they are also motivated to learn about history, economy, language as well as culture of the Koreans. At the same time, Korean fashions, food, and electronic goods become famous and Taiwanese also prefer going to Korea to undergo surgeries (Sung, 2010).

Taiwanese people regard South Korea as a nation that has excellently established a place in the international and East Asian community and they believe that Korean culture managed to penetrate their market due to Korea's internal unification as well as strong resistance to westernization (Sung, 2010).

Many Taiwanese also regard South Korea as an advanced, modernised country that has positioned itself honourably in the global community. As stated in the Taipei Times editorial, "Taiwanese must admit they are slow to implement reforms and craft new social policies. The South Koreans are much more brave and determined about seeking innovation, and accepting challenges (Sung, 2010)."

Yet, Taiwan's television industry has limited the import of foreign TV programs by setting time programming limits, in view of the impact of Korean dramas on local

channels. It has banned imported TV programs from being broadcasted during primetime slots since 2006, a regulation seen as limiting the inflow of Korean TV dramas (Kim & Kang, 2006; Kim, Y. D., 2005; Lee & Won, 2005). Nevertheless, Ju (2010) stated that about 124 or more Taiwanese cable TV stations seek foreign TV programs to fill airtime today.

3.3.3 Japan

Korea and Japan are close neighbours but at first they were the two countries that do not have a close relationship. According to Guan (2012), "although Japan and Korea are neighbours in the South Asian region and share the same Eastern cultures through historical contact with Chinese culture and Buddhism, a number of barriers have divided the two countries". Especially in terms of the entry of foreign products, Japan has been widely regarded as somewhat culture-resistant and a country that foreign industries find difficult to penetrate (Xu, 2014).

Essentially, Japan and Korea have advanced their cultural exchanges since 1980, especially from 1998 till now (Guan, 2012). The "Cultural commodity" genre has resulted in both Japanese and Korean television dramas to be established as leaders of popular culture in East Asia (Xu, 2014). The genre enabled these countries to pursue high ratings, promote branded products and appease program sponsors in both countries especially by capturing the young middle-class viewers in the region. To this end, it deliberately promotes young idols and modern, attractive lifestyles for the young audiences.

However, according to Guan (2012), Korea has followed in the footsteps of Japan in the developing its growth. Emulating Japan's success, it was noted that the Korean government invested in high band-width infrastructure, such as "the fast-track development of high-value digital content also cultivated high levels of techno-literacy". Korea path has however, taken a less international, as the country has opted for products that are primarily generic within Asia (TV drama, video games, and cinema). It also tried to exploit the lure of Korean culture as an alternative to Japan in some East Asian markets (Guan, 2012).

According to Ju (2010), the entry of Korean media products into the Japanese media market marked an important turning point for the former's cultural output. Although Korea had imposed a ban on cultural exchanges with Japan for more than 30 years after 1948, the Korean Wave brought about changes between the two countries. The influx of the Korean media content into Japan was rapid and led to an increase in the exchange of the cultural products between these two countries.

Historically, Japan had attacked Korean many times and one of the impactful one was the large-scale war 1592–98 and the recent Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945. It was this colonial rule that the Chosun Dynasty had to give up their power to Japan, forcing the Koreans to regret their lost sovereignty (Kim et al., 2007).

Throughout the colonialization, numerous historical monuments and relics were demolished or taken to Japan. Besides that, the separation of the Korean peninsula happened when the Japanese army invaded Korea during the end of World War 11

(WWII) were being repatriated. As a consequence, the two countries have been alienated even though they are geographically close (S. S. Kim et al., 2007).

But history does dictate Korean's ability to rise again. Despite the barriers between Japan and Korea, interestingly, Korea has been successful in disarming Japan by its 'soft cultural power'. This is ironic considering Japan's "hard military power" that annexed and colonized the Korean peninsula about 95 years ago (Hanaki, 2007). Yet, this cultural conisation occurred with the arrival of the Korean wave.

The phenomenon of Korean wave manifested itself in Japan when the 20-hour, 20-episode Winter Sonata was aired. When NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai; official English name Japan Broadcasting Corporation), Japan's national network television, first broadcasted Winter Sonata in 2003 on its satellite channel, the drama series captured the hearts of Japanese audiences, especially Japanese middle-aged women (Endo & Matsumoto, 2004; Murakami, 2004; 'War Ton', 2004). As stated by Hanaki (2007), "Winter Sonata's unprecedented popularity opened the floodgates for the Korean tsunami to wash ashore in Japan."

While in the past there existed only a Japanese media flow to the rest of Asia, the successful entrance of Korean TV dramas into the Japanese market in recent years marked a change. The ban on famous cultural assimilation between Korea and Japan (Han, 2000) (Han, 2000) ended in 1998 when it officially announced an open policy for cultural contents from Japan (Ju, 2011). However, even before the uplifting of the ban, the media industry in Korea has, to some extent, used the culture of pop of Japan in its unofficial means for a number of years.

According to Ju (2011), "the open-door policy toward Japanese cultural inflow was declared and executed in Korea's four culture domains during the Kim Dae-Jung Administration." This emerged as the result of summit talks between President Kim and the Japanese Premier which have agreed upon four measures to make Korean cultures open to the Japanese as well as to ensure Japanese cultural products relevant for audiences in Korea. Firstly, the importation of Japanese films and printed media products was allowed starting the year 1998 and this was followed by allowing cultural performances in 1999. Thirdly, the animation for theatres, Japanese pop concerts, computer games and television programs started to be imported to Korea in 2000. Even after the Kim's presidency, the Roh Mu-Hyun premiership implemented to the same policy established which eventually led to the fourth stage where Japanese programs and music were allowed to be aired on Korea's cable and satellite television starting 2004 (Ju, 2011).

The successful debut of Korean television dramas in Japan was largely due to the phenomenal appeal of *Winter Sonata* (Ju, 2011). The fever Korean TV drama series *Winter Sonata* has led to a variety of positive economic and socio-cultural impacts in Japan. This is clearly seen through the increasing flow of Japanese tourists, indicating a raise of 35.5% and 35.4% in 2005 from 2003 and 2004 respectively (Knto, 2006; Kim et al., 2007). Many Japanese are interested to visit, Nami Island in Gangwon province as the *Winter Sonata* scenes of the leading actor and actress are filmed there. Therefore, the Korean Wave is deemed as a bridge that enhances the reputation of South Korea as a tourist attraction spot (Kim et al., 2007).

Kim et al (2007) quoted The New York Times (2004) comment that attributed the booming popularity of Korean TV series on their capacity to stimulate emotional bonds that many Japanese women feel are dead and buried under uncertainty and pessimism in the current Japanese society (Kim et al., 2007).

In fact, according to Kim et al. (2009), the smash hits of Winter Sonata were very clear among the Japanese audiences. Winter Sonata merchandise included similar fashions of clothing and accessories worn in the series, and consumer demand far exceeded supply. Printed media including books and magazines displaying on movies, fashion and hairstyles from Korean celebrities turned famous.

Due to extraordinary acceptance of Winter Sonata in Japan, especially among women, Bae Yong-Joon's (who acted the main character, Jun-sang) visit to Tokyo in 2004 has shown welcoming surprises by his fans. He was given an overwhelming sense of passion over his appearance in Winter Sonata where Japanese women came in droves (about 3500) to the airport to see him (Kim et al., 2009).

The boons resulted from the Winter Sonata extraordinary acceptance extended socio-cultural effects (Kim et al., 2007). According to a survey conducted by Modung Ilbo (2005), Japanese audience that consume the drama had reached 38 per cent of which half of the participants claimed that Korean culture has become something close to them. 26 per cent of them claimed that their thoughts about Korea had shifted and another 22 per cent said that they became more interested to know more about Korea (Modung Ilbo, 2005). The boom caused by the romantic drama involved people wanting to understand Korean culture and learning Korean language via the drama's

script, buying Korean music and books, watching Korean movies, and trying out Korean food (Modung Ilbo, 2005; Kim et al., 2007).

Secondly, as Japanese industrial society paled in comparison and appeared to be selfish and materialistic (Kim et al., 2007), the drama *Winter Sonata* raises the importance of pure love and self-sacrifice. This made the Japanese viewers feel that something was missing in their lives and they started living vicariously through melodrama and rediscovering their nostalgic, first love (Kim et al., 2007).

Third, despite an unconscious discrimination against the people of Korea-Japan, after this romantic TV drama was aired, the atmosphere of discrimination against the two Koreas, Japan and Korea in Japan decreased. (Brasor, 2004; Faiola, 2006 as cited in Kim et al., 2007).

The popularity of Korean pop culture in Japan, initiated by *Winter Sonata*, was affected as the historical ties between the people of this country hostile before. The feud is rooted in Japan's occupation of the Korean Peninsula where the Koreans had to face Japanese's merciless for more than three decades from 1909 until 1945 (Dudden, 2004). In addition, due to territorial rights of an island located between Takeshima, Japan and Dokdo Korea, both the governments were in a deadlock situation (Endo & Matsumoto, 2004) while the 'Korean comfort women' were treated as sexual slaves for the Japanese army during World War II (Kim et al., 2009).

Furthermore, according to Kim et al. (2009), the exploitation extended to around 2 million Koreans, who were transported to work in Japan as hard labourers during the colonial period. The outcome of this exploitation has brought untold misery as the descendants of the 700,000 labourers, called Zainichi Koreans or Koreans residing in Japan, are still living in Japan but without Japanese citizenship (Han et al., 2007). Such historical events have created animosity between the Japanese (especially those of the older generation) and the South and North Koreans and Zainichi Koreans (Kim et al., 2009).

Despite these historical, political and emotional barriers, *Winter Sonata* managed to win the hearts of the Japanese viewers. Thus, as reported by various news in both Japan and Korea, many Korean dramas' fans emerged especially among middle-aged and older women (Hanaki et al., 2007). Another interesting fact is, the popularity of Korean dramas is also contributed by its elder Japanese women where this audience group was growing up during the peak times of animosity and hostility towards the Korean people. Yet, now the Japanese women are infatuated by the main actors and they began travelling to Korea to visiting the *Winter Sonata* locations.

Thus it can be surmised that the *Winter Sonata* phenomenon and the accompanying Korean wave brought about important perceptual changes in Japan toward Korean–Japanese history and diplomatic ties between these nations. It changed a lot of perceptions on everything South Korean (Han et al., 2007; Hanaki et al., 2007).

According to Kim (2006), various public announcements, press releases and media campaigns were held to advance Korea's main agenda for the 21st century which

aims at securing a leading position in the global economy, competing against Japan. Japan countered these efforts by issuing warnings to neighbouring countries, detailing the broad implications of the wave. As observed by Kim, cultural imperialism may be the outcome of the Korean Creative Industry or even lead to the creation of a multicultural society in the North East, or East Asia. At worst, the imperialism may distort or encroach on the vitality of other Asian cultures and would be an obstacle for stability and coexistence in the region (Kim, 2006). Experts suggested that there should be a clear demarcation between Korean culture and other countries if the Korean wave was to continue (Lee, 2011).

3.3.4 Other Countries

A statistic reveals that there has been a steady increase of the Korean TV programs exported to other countries since 1988. Specifically, the rate of demand for television programs from Korea in other countries has risen proportionately with the decrease of import rate of foreign TV programs to Korea (Kim, 2011).

Countries such as Japan, Taiwan, China, Malaysia, Thailand and India are among the 20 nations that have aired *Winter Sonata*, while another drama *Daejanggeum* has been aired in 87 countries especially Asia. Other than Asia, the Korean television dramas are also famous in Russia, Turkey, Iran and Israel. As a whole, the success of *Winter Sonata* and *Daejanggeum* became the acceptance benchmark of Korean contents globally (Tuk, 2012).

In the Middle East countries especially Turkey, Jordan, Israel and Iran, Korean dramas can also be found. In Iran, *Daejanggeum* got a welcoming amount of viewers

of its entrance in 2006, which also happened in Brazil. The same craze over the Korean TV dramas also took place in Mexico, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Puerto Rico and Peru. In Africa and European continents, only a few countries have started airing Korean dramas including Romania, Bulgaria, France and Nigeria. In the meantime, American audiences watch Korean dramas through the medium of Internet. Websites like Hulu, Drama Fever, Soju and Drama Crazy are used for this. (Korean Culture and Information Service, 2011)

At the peak of the Korean Wave in the mid-1990s, much cynicism and accusations were made about its long-term future (Han Hyejŏng Cho et al. 2003; Chu et al. 2007; Changsun Pak 2007 as cited in Hogarth, 2013). There were strong anti-Korean Wave movements in Japan and China, and even Koreans expressed doubts about its continued success. But the sceptics have been proven wrong, as the wave has spread as far as the Middle east and even America (Chang 2006:5). The wave has profited the Korean wave stars who are entered in Wikipedia, with male stars being amongst the highest paid outside of Hollywood. Their annual earnings are said to have reached beyond the \$10 million mark. Korean pop stars' performances and TV dramas have also flooded YouTube, drawing millions of viewers worldwide (Hogarth, 2013).

The Korean Wave has significantly impacted the Korean national economy through exports of its merchandise and increased tourism (Yi, 2011). For instance, the amount of tourists visiting Korea between 2003 and 2004 escalated from 2.8 million to 3.7 million tourists, following Japan's airing of Winter Sonata in 2003. Exports made from the Korean Wave were estimated by some to be around \$3.8 billion in

2011 which is a 14% increase from 2010. All these were believed to have enhanced the image of South Korea internationally (Yu 2005; Im 2009; Ch'oe 2010 as cited in Yi 2011).

Clearly, Korean dramas have their own strengths and advantages to be able to captivate not only countries like China, Taiwan and Japan but also Middle East countries. The excitement of these big nations adds to the success of Korea in penetrating the entertainment market in foreign countries.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology explains the methods employed in this study to answer the research questions presented and achieve the research objectives. This section will discuss the methodology used in this study, the research design, and explain the appropriate data collection methods and the data analysis techniques. Diagrams and figures have also been created to facilitate and explain the research process and stages applied.

This research was divided into two parts through two (2) interviews. The first was an interview conducted directly with participants who were selected from Korean media participants. The researcher identifies the participants through discussion with a Korean officer from Asian Broadcasting Unit (ABU) to recognize the right participants from KBS and SBS in Korea to be interviewed. In order to clarify the data obtained is validated and verified, researcher has conducted pragmatic validity process as a second part of data collection whereby four participants from Malaysian creative industries expert been chosen. They are composed of two Malaysian drama's productions, a Media Prima Brand Management Officer and a Senior Associate Compliance & Presentation Astro Malaysia.

This study was based in Malaysia and focuses on the strategies employed by Korean media in promoting Korean television dramas in Malaysia. To this end, the researcher uses qualitative methods to address the research problems. This method is best used as it aims to investigate human phenomena and investigate interpretations and meaning that are unknown and needed to be explored. Literature reviews may

yield insufficient information about the study and thus more information are needed to be gathered through exploration from participants (Creswell, 2014).

In addition to that, qualitative research is particularly useful to explore new topics or complex issues. This can benefit the researcher to explain people's beliefs and behaviour (Hennink et. al., 2015). For this particular research, by carrying out qualitative method, the researcher has been able to identify and understand the social or cultural norms of a culture or society.

According to Roger and Dominick (2006) as cited in Lee (2013, p.313), qualitative techniques can increase a researcher's depth of understanding of the phenomenon in question, especially if the phenomenon has been previously investigated. Hennick et. al., (2015) described that one of the main distinctive features of qualitative research is that the approach allows the researcher to understand the issues investigated from the perspectives of the participants by providing an in-depth understanding of the research issues.

Hennick et. al., (2015) also concluded that qualitative research is most suitable to explain and understand issues or to describe processes or behaviour. This further enforces the reason behind why the researcher has decided to use qualitative method as it enables researcher to understand how Korean dramas have been successful in having a big impact on Malaysian's audiences.

In this study, the researcher conducted a face-to-face interview with participants and the methodology is designed to be less structured and more open-ended to encourage

the participants to freely share their experience and knowledge in detail. The goal of this method is to maximise the depth of information collected. More importantly, the research objectives and problem statements of this studies could be achieved and identified objectively as presented in the following descriptions.

4.1 Research Process

The researcher identifies the research process as follow:

Table 4.1

Data Collection Process

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS	
Methods	Description
1. Identify the problem statement.	There seemed to be a gap in previous researches concerning the role of the media in promoting and marketing the dramas. The influence of media strategy has not been discussed or even mentioned in their respective research or findings.
2. Identify the research questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do Korean dramas attract the Malaysian audiences? • What are the strategies adopted by Korean media broadcasters in promoting Korean television dramas? • What are the Korean media strategies to gain and maintain the popularity of Korean television dramas in Malaysia?
3. Identify the participants	The researcher discussed with a Korean officer from Asian Broadcasting Unit (ABU) to recognize the right participants from KBS and SBS in Korea to be interviewed.
4. Type of research	In depth face-to-face interview Initially six participants were recommended; they are three from KBS and three from SBS.
5. Participants	KBS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Content Business Officer, Channel Manager ii. KBS World Channel & Content

	<p>Business, Senior Drama Producer.</p> <p>iii. International Relations Department, Project Manager</p> <p>SBS</p> <p>i. Drama center/ Producer</p> <p>ii. Entertainment president</p> <p>iii. TV Division Executive Managing Director</p> <p>Note: Two of the participants (one from KBS and another from SBS) were not providing a detail discussion as questioned.</p>
6. Permission seeking	The researcher is able to create awareness to the participants about the nature of the study and what are expected out of them in this study. All the participants were informed through email before researcher flew to Seoul, Korea.
7. Recording data	The interviews needed to be digitally recorded to enable transcription.
8. Interview journey	As the interviewees reside in South Korea, the researcher has to travel to South Korea for duration of ten days.
9. Organizing data	Data collected is in the form of audio recordings. In order to organize the recorded data, the researcher has to transcribe all the tapes into computer files format. Transcribing involves the process of listening to the audio recordings and simultaneously writes down everything that is said on the tape.
10. Data coding	<p>In the coding process, the raw data collected are then segmented and labelled to form descriptions and broad themes in the data.</p> <p>In this research, after carrying out the data coding, only statements from four out of six participants are brought into highlight due to the direction and focus of this study.</p>
11. Member checking	The researcher has sent back the organized and analyses data based from the participants' transcription to the participants itself so that they can validate the data. This was done once the researcher had completed writing the summary of data. The data is sent in through email and they respond within

	two weeks as agreed and mark as endorsement.
12. Pragmatic validity	In order to clarify the data obtained is valid and true, researcher has conducted pragmatic validity process whereby four participants from Malaysian creative industries expert been chosen. They are composed of two Malaysian drama's productions, a Media Prima Brand Management Officer and a Senior Associate Compliance & Presentation Astro Malaysia.



4.2 Research Timeline

Below is the research timeline to demonstrate the field work period.

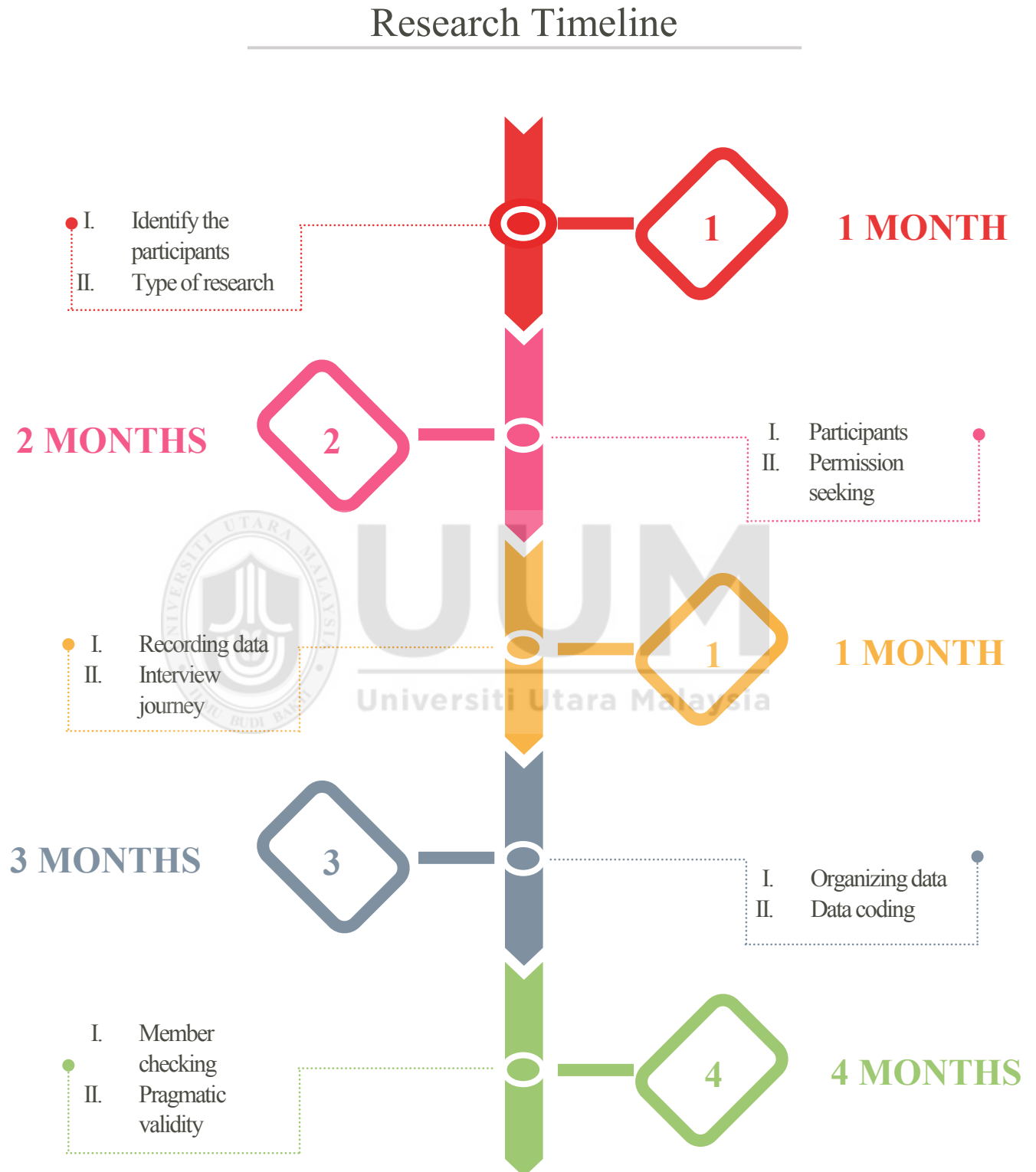


Figure 4.1 Research Timeline

4.3 Data Sources

Researchers usually employ these three methods; participant observation, in-depth interview and focus groups. Each of these methods have specific advantages and are used in accordance with the data required (Mack, et al, 2011).

To achieve the data required for this study, the researcher employed the in-depth interview method. The researcher had a depth discussed with a Korean officer from Asian Broadcasting Unit (ABU) to recognize the right participants from KBS and SBS in Korea to be interviewed. Initially 6 participants were recommended; they are three from KBS and three from SBS. However, only four participants, (2) from the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) and another two (2) from the Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) were considered. The other two of the participants (one from KBS and another from SBS) were not providing a detail discussion as questioned. Although there are four (4) participants that been chosen, they are selected based on their expertise in their respective fields and ability to provide in-depth information. According to Creswell (2012) the number of sample may be several which ranging from 1 to 2 or 30 to 40. _It is typical in qualitative research to study a few individuals or a few cases. This is because the overall ability of a researcher to provide an in-depth picture diminishes with the addition of each new individual or site. One objective of qualitative research is to present the complexity of a site or of the information provided by individuals (Creswell, 2012).

4.3.1 In-depth Interview

According to Mack, et al (2011), in-depth interviews is the most ideal method to collect data on an individual's personal histories, perspectives, and experiences,

particularly when sensitive topics are being explored. This statement is line with what the researcher is trying to achieve for the outcome of this study. Thus, this further enforces the practicality of conducting in-depth interviews for this research. King and Horrocks (2011) have also supported this statement by mentioning that interviewing is the most commonly used form of methods to collect data in qualitative research.

In-depth interview is a method of data collection that involves a one-to-one interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee discussing specific topics extensively. It can also be described as a conversation with a purpose. However, researcher also noted as regarding to Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey (2015) an in-depth interview is not a two-way dialogue but rather it is a session in which the interviewee shares their story and the interviewer only need to ask questions and motivate the interviewees to share their perspectives.

Alvesson (2003) defines in-depth interviews as “relatively loosely structured and open to what the interviewee feels is relevant and important to talk about, given the interest of the research project”. Incorporating in-depth aspect in the face-to-face interview is important as it enables the researcher to gain detailed and extensive insight into the research issues from the perspective of the participants. (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2015)

Stone-Romero (2004) asserted that conducting interviews in a cultural research will ‘provide considerable depth on a research topic and may illuminate rich, cultural-specific perspectives’. Interviews were chosen as a data collection method over other

methods because this research is investigating Korean media strategy, and it was essential to obtain insights from the related participants. The interview was held over a period of ten days at a Korean television station, in Seoul, South Korea.

In-depth interviews can be divided into three classes: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Carruthers, 1990). In this study, the researcher has opted to use semi-structured interviews for data collection. In the initial phase, observations and informal interviewing takes place so that the researchers may develop better understanding of the topic at hand and effectively develop relevant and meaningful semi-structured questions (Cohen, 2006).

In constructing semi-structured interviews, the researcher has to ensure that there is a structure in their implementation. This can be achieved by constructing an interview schedule so that all participants in the interviews do receive some questions in common. Although the questions asked to each participants are somewhat made to be the same, semi-structured interviews allows flexibility to the interviewer to make maximum use of the opportunities offered to supplement the data. However, Carruthers (1990) reminded that it is essential to note that the focus of the study must never be changed.

4.3.1.1 Advantages

According to Cohen (2006), semi-structured interview is able to provide a clear guideline for interviewers and can provide reliable, comparable qualitative data. By using a semi-structured in-depth interview, it allows a greater flexibility in the interaction between the researcher and participants. The interviewer will be able to

probe semi-structured or “open-ended” that enables the interviewee to voice their own perspectives and experiences and these answers are different from one interviewee to another (Mack, MacQueen, & Guest, 2011).

A semi-structured interview, also a research method of the social sciences, allows for greater flexibility as compared to structured interviews. It is more open and allows new ideas to be raised by the interviewee rather than being dictated by a rigorous set of questions with no avenues for diversion (Bjørnholt, M; Farstad, G.R., 2012). Such in-depth interviews are powerful as they can open up and delve into the private and sometimes incommunicable social world of the interviewee. The researcher, therefore, gains deeper insight into the research issues and is able to aptly convey the interviewee’s intended message. (Qu & Dumay, 2011)

This method has allowed the researcher to gain an insight on the criteria that has been able to attract Malaysian audiences to Korean dramas. Through the sets of semi-structured questions, the researcher was able to probe questions to the interviewees and enable them to answer through their own experiences and perspectives based on their culture. Following the responses of the interviewees, the researcher has also been able to spontaneously probe more questions and create more variables that are unknown to the researcher to solidify the data the collected.

4.4 Data Collection

According to Creswell (2014), there are five steps involved in a qualitative data collection. These are identifying participants, permission seeking, the type of data

collection used, recording data and field and ethical issues. In the next section, all of these steps will be explained in detail.

4.4.1 Participants – Purposeful Sampling

In this stage, a recruitment strategy is formed whereby the researcher will identify and enrol people to participate in the research study that can help the researcher to understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). The criteria that needed to be taken into consideration are screening potential participants, the number of people to be recruited, the location and the approach to be used (Mack, MacQueen & Guest, 2011).

Creswell (2014), further explained that there are several sample strategies that are available in order to identify and recruit participants for a study. For this particular research, a method that is widely used in qualitative research which is purposeful sampling is applied. Purposeful sampling is utilized to collect and identify data that make up a big and important part of a case of study (Palinkas, et al., 2013). This is done by carefully hand-picking individuals that can help the researcher to understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2014).

As qualitative research is an iterative process, the criteria for selection can be changed if certain data collection activities or the participants are proven not to be useful in answering the research questions (Mack, Cynthia, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2011) Based on this, it is important to note that the initial number of participants involved in this study is six (6), however, only statements from four (4)

participants are brought into highlight as the statements from the other two (2) participants are not providing a detail discussion as per questioned.

Achieving saturation will enable the research to create strong themes. The saturation process entails refining, developing, and clarifying the meaning of the categories (Creswell, 2012). Saturation has to be achieved in data collection and analysis to ensure the firm of the themes.

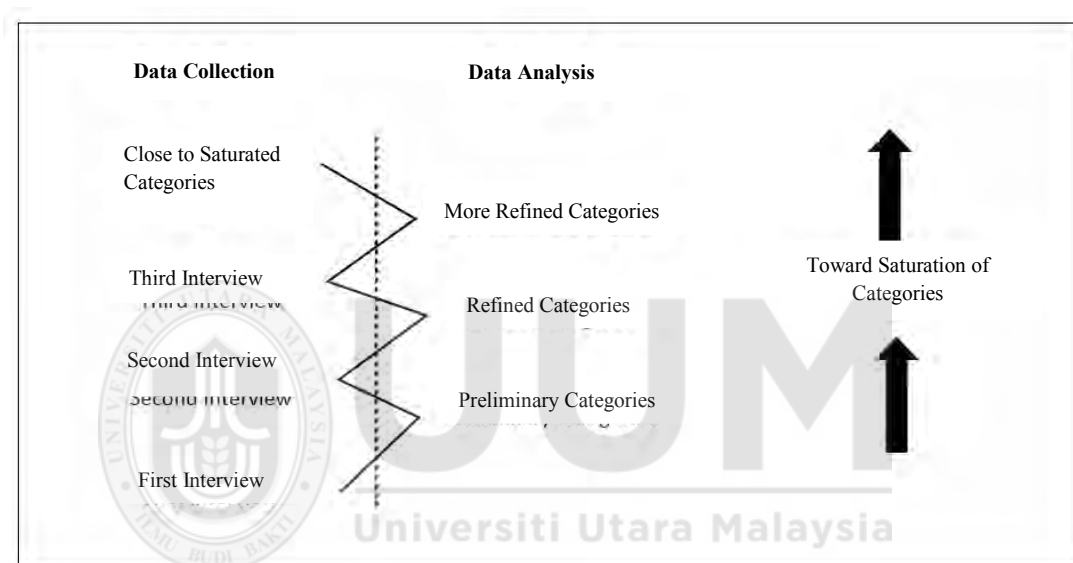


Figure 4.2. Shows the zigzag data collection and analysis to achieve saturation of categories

The figure 4.2 illustrates the process of refining raw data into firm themes. It shows the process of data been analyse from all the interviews. Saturation is achieved once there is no new information or insights emerge for developing categories.

For better understanding of their views on the research and their culture, the researcher has chosen to recruit participant who resides in Korea by using the concept of purposeful sampling. The researcher has identified four interviewees from

two main broadcasting systems in Korea namely Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) and Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS).

Founded in 1972, the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) is a radio and television network that receives full back-up by the government. It is the biggest South Korean television network, has a foreign partnership with Radio and Television Malaysia (RTM), and counts the TV movie "Winter Sonata" as one of its most successful exports. The second broadcasting system, Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) is the only private commercial broadcaster with wide regional network affiliates within the country. The station has a partnership with TV Alhijrah, Malaysia, with some of their dramas also contributing to the Korean Wave.

All of the participants involved are those positioned under the media management strategies including public relations officers and officers of research, planning and development of television broadcasting.

4.4.2 Permission Seeking

After the researcher has been able to identify suitable participants to contribute to the study, the next step is to seek permission from several counterparts in order to gain access to interview the said participants. These counterparts can include, but not limited to, organizations, individuals or campus institutional review boards (Creswell, 2014). Creswell (2014), further explains that the steps of this stage involves obtaining the board's approval, describing the project, creating a consent form and reviewing the project.

At this stage, the researcher is able to create awareness to the participants about the nature of the study and what are expected out of them in this study. For this research, the researcher has sought permission to interview the selected participants and all the participants were informed through email before researcher flew to Seoul, Korea. They were willing to cooperate; however, the detail of participants is confidential due to their request.

4.4.3 Identifying the Type of Data Collection

Creswell (2014), mentioned that there are several categories of data collection namely observations, interviews and questionnaires, documents and audio-visual materials. Therefore, it is vital that researchers are familiar with the questions the study is trying to answer so that a proper and suitable type of data collection can be identified. After carefully deliberating on the type of data collection to be used, the researcher has decided to adopt interviews as the most preferred method. Creswell (2014), described interviews as “Unstructured text data obtained from transcribing audiotapes of interviews”.

Interviews can further be divided into face-to-face interviews, focus groups, telephone interviews, e-mail interviews and open-ended questions on questionnaires (Creswell, 2014). In this study, data collection was conducted in a face-to-face manner. Although this method is the most time-consuming and costly, it is the most suitable as all the participants reside in Korea and there is a language barrier between the researcher and participants as both parties do not practice the same mother language. Fortunately, during the whole process of the interview, the researcher was assisted by a third-year Malaysian student studying in Korea.

4.4.4 Recording Data

Once the type of data collection had been identified, the researcher plan and design how to record information such as the use of protocols in interviews. According to Creswell (2014), an interview protocol is a set of forms that contains instructions for the purpose of the interview, questions to be asked to interviewees and space to take notes of responses from the interviewee.

Interview protocol is not only a set of questions but also include guidelines to direct the research throughout the entire interview process. This includes a script that will be used by the interviewer before and at the end of the interview. As suggested by Jacob & Furgerson (2012), it acts as a prompt for the interviewer, firstly for obtaining consent and secondly, about the information required by the researcher (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

The interviews needed to be digitally recorded to enable transcription, and once the researcher decides that enough data has been collected or when further interviews no longer provide relevant information to the aim of the study, the interviews will be ended (Flick, 2006).

The semi-structured interviews are designed with a set of interview protocols that will steer the researcher will be guided towards the main issues and lines of inquiry. It is the responsibility of the researcher to the sequence of questions in each interview, according to each participant's response. Daymon and Holloway (2002) observed that this enables deeper thoughts by the participants and allows the

interviewer to spontaneously prompt for more information following the participants' responses.

4.4.5 Interview protocol

Before the interview take place, the questions of interview had been prepared based on the problem and research question of the study. According to Creswell (2012), in qualitative interview protocol it is essential to record the information about the interview. Therefore, the researcher makes a clear purpose statement about of the study to the participants. During interviewing, the audiotaping is provided to record the detail of the interview. However, as a backup note are also done along the session.

According to Creswell (2012), in qualitative interview protocol it is essential to record the information about the interview. Therefore, the researcher makes a clear purpose statement about of the study to the participants. They are also reminded of the recording equipment to be used. Other information you might include in the header would be the organization or work affiliation of the interviewees; their educational background and position; the number of years they have been in the position; and the date, time, and location of the interview.

As for the purpose of an icebreaker to relax the interviewees and motivate them to talk, the first question should be easy to understand and cause the participants to reflect on experiences that they can easily discuss. The researcher needs to memorize the wording and the order of the questions to minimize losing eye contact. At the end of the session, the researcher thanked the participants and assures them of the confidentiality. They are also being asked if they have any questions, and a reminder

to discuss the use of the data and the dissemination of information from the study. To sum up, the researcher has prepared the interview protocol sample as shown on Figure 4.3.

Sample of the interview protocol:

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	
Project:	Korean Television Drama in Malaysia: An analysis on Korean Media Strategy.
Time interview:	10am
Date:	17 February 2015
Place:	Participant Office, Korean Broadcasting System, Seoul, Korea.
Interviewer:	Julina Tajul Ariffin
Position of Interviewee:	Senior Drama Producer, KBS World Channel & Content Business.
 Describe to the participant:	
(a) The purpose of the study:	To investigate the Korean media strategy in attracting Malaysian audiences
(b) The individuals and sources of data being collected:	— To discover the media strategy
(c) What will be done with the data to protect the confidentiality of the interviewee:	The name of participant will remain anonymous
(d) How long the interview will take:	30 to 45 minutes
 Questions	
i.	Please describe your role in KBS.
ii.	What can you tell on Korean drama achievements in Malaysia.
iii.	How do see the future of Korean drama in Malaysia.
iv.	Is there any strategy by your organization in promoting Korean television drama.
 <i>Thank you for your cooperation. I will send you a copy of the transcription for you to check and comment.</i>	

Figure 4.3 Interview Protocol sample

4.4.6 Field and Ethical Issues

Creswell (2014), mentioned that researchers should anticipate potential issues that might arise during the process of data collection. The field issues that should be considered by a researcher are access, observations, interviews, documents, journals and audio-visual materials. Utmost attention to these details should be paid in order to avoid any disturbances during the process of data collection.

In the issue of access, the researcher has to find a mean to gain access to the interviewees. For this study, as the interviewees reside in South Korea, the researcher has to travel to South Korea for duration of a week in order to be able to conduct interviews with the participants.

Based on the nature of this study, ethical issues are a main concern for the researcher especially during the face-to-face interviews. During interviews, the comfort of the participants was emphasized and no harm must be made to the participant. It is also important for the researcher to not disrupt the lives of the participants. Thus, informed consent is vital to avoid the violation this ethical issue (Mack, Cynthia, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2011).

The three main universal principles that form the basis for research ethics based on The Belmont Report 1 are as follows:

- i) Respect for persons: To respect the dignity of all research participants so as to protect people from exploitation of their vulnerability.
- ii) Beneficence: To commit to minimizing the research related risks, such as psychological and social risks and to maximize benefits for the participants.

- iii) Justice: To commit to ensuring fair distribution of risks and benefits from the research. Those who take on the burdens of research participation should share in the benefits of the knowledge gained.

According to Mack, Cynthia, MacQueen, Guest & Namey (2011), a fourth principle, respect for communities, should be added. This refers to the researcher's obligation to respect the values and interests of the community and protect the community from harm, in research and, wherever possible, to protect the community from harm.

Ethical issues in research can include means to get access to the participants, duration of stay in the field and how to interact with the participants. It is important to convince the participants about the purpose of the study and the impact it will have (Creswell, 2014). This issue became apparent in this study as the researcher and participants are brought up in a different culture. Thus, the researcher has to pay careful attention towards the matter and topics that are brought up during the interviews in order to respect the participants' culture, history and privacy.

Furthermore, English is not the language that often used in Korea, the researcher has to be more careful and try the best so as to make them understand and comfortable with the interview conducted. Fortunately, the researcher also accompanied by a Korean translator together to help facilitate over the conversation.

4.4.7 Schedule of Interview process

Table 4.2.

The schedule of the interview in Korea

Date	Activity
16 February 2015	Arriving in Seoul, Korea.
Day ONE	1 st KBS participant – 9.30 am
Day TWO	2 nd KBS participant – 11 am
Day THREE	3 rd SBS participant – 2 pm
Day FOUR	4 rd SBS participant – 3 pm
21 February 2015	Returning to Malaysia

Researcher stop the interview after the fourth participant as described before by Flick (2006), the data collection process will be stopped at the point where the researcher decided that enough data has been collected or when further interviews no longer provide relevant information to the aim of the study.

4.5 Data Analysis

After relevant information has been required, the next step is to analyse all the data. This is done so that the researcher can make sense of the data collected so that the answers related to the research questions can be formed (Creswell, 2014). In this section, the process that will be explained in detail are how to organize the data, coding the data, developing related themes, analysis procedure and validating data trustworthiness.

4.5.1 Data Coding

Before beginning the step of coding a data, a researcher must first carry out a preliminary exploratory analysis or in a simpler term, exploring the data. To define,

preliminary explanatory analysis consists of obtaining a general sense of the data, memorizing ideas, thinking about the organization of the data and considering the need for additional data (Creswell, 2012). This can be done by reading the interview transcripts several times in order to get a sense of the interview before proceeding to the next step. Since both the participants and researcher do not practice the same native language, this step is essential so that the researcher can comprehend correctly the message that the participants are trying to deliver in order to avoid miscommunications.

It is also important to note that during this stage, King and Horrocks (2010) highlighted the need to avoid bias. The researchers need to practice 'Epochē', the ability to leave their own preconceptions and prior beliefs or theories from other studies so as to avoid bias.

The next step in the process of analysing the data is to code the data. In the coding process, the raw data collected are then segmented and labelled to form descriptions and broad themes in the data. This process is essential in order to make sense out of the text data and narrowing the data collected into relevant themes (Creswell, 2012).

A code in qualitative research is most often a word or short phrase that fundamentally can capture the essence or attribute to a large portion of the collected data (Saldana, 2009). Saldana (2009) further reflects that coding is similar to how a title captures a book or film's primary content and essence. This is also how a code represent and capture the data's primary content and essence.

During this process, the researcher will only select specific data to use and disregard other data that are irrelevant for the theme intended (Creswell, 2014). In this research, after carrying out the data coding, only statements from four out of six participants are brought into highlight due to the direction and focus of this study. These statements are furthered narrowed down to only include data that are relevant to the intended themes. Figure 4.3 shows on how raw data can be coded into relevant themes. This research follows the same model as represented below.

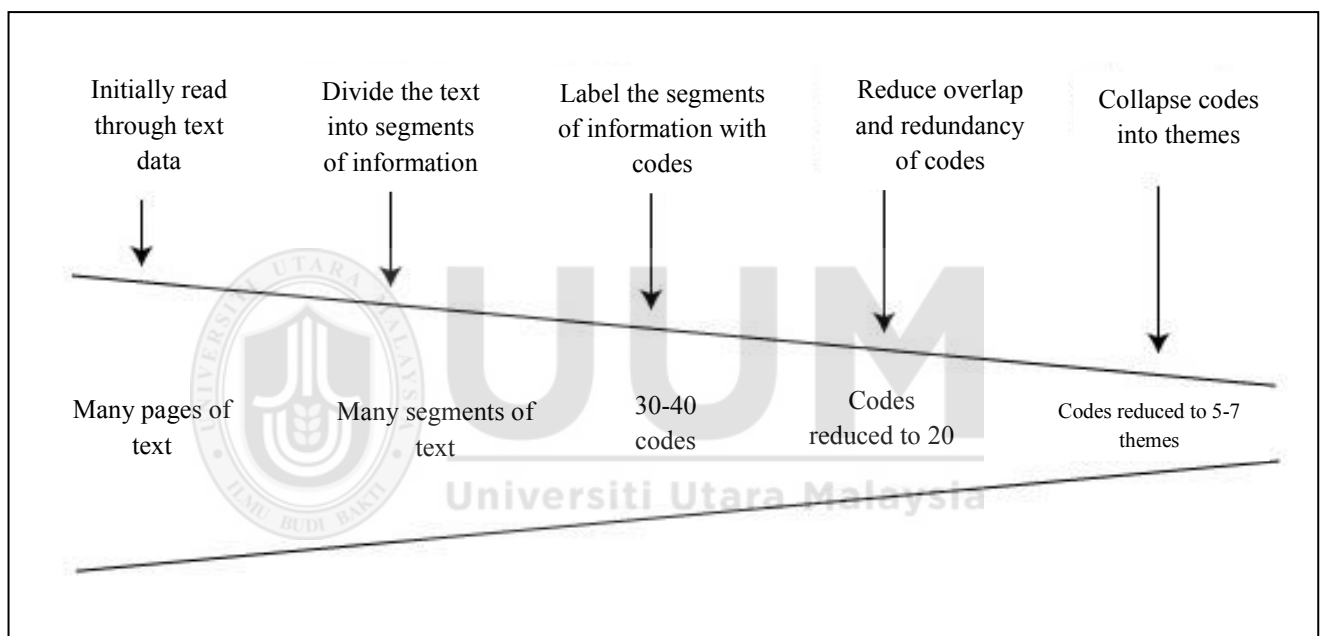


Figure 4.3 A visual model of the coding process in Qualitative Research by J. David Creswell

Initially, figure 4.3 reflected on how the process of coding being done and coded from many segmentations of texts which were massive. The researcher had to read it repeatedly to make sense out of the data. The data were overlapping and had redundancy codes. The researcher had to narrow down and create more relevant codes. At the end, the codes been reduced into 5-7 themes.

4.5.2 Organizing Data

As the researcher of this study uses the method of in-depth interviews, the data collected is in the form of audio recordings. In order to organize the recorded data, the researcher has to transcribe all the tapes into computer files format. Transcribing involves the process of listening to the audio recordings and simultaneously writes down everything that is said on the tape (Mack, Cynthia, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2011).

Since English is not the common use, their pronunciation is much influenced by Korean language and in this case the challenge of learning to understand the participant word by word and therefore, the process of listening had been done over and over again until researcher fully understood and satisfied each conversation.

Transcriptions should be conducted once the interview ends, while memories are still fresh. Besides familiarising the researcher with the data (Langdrige, 2004), this process simultaneously aids the researchers in analysing the information. In fact, according to Guba & Lincoln (1989) as cited in Creswell (2012), the practice of transcribing earlier findings will lead researchers to collect more relevant data.

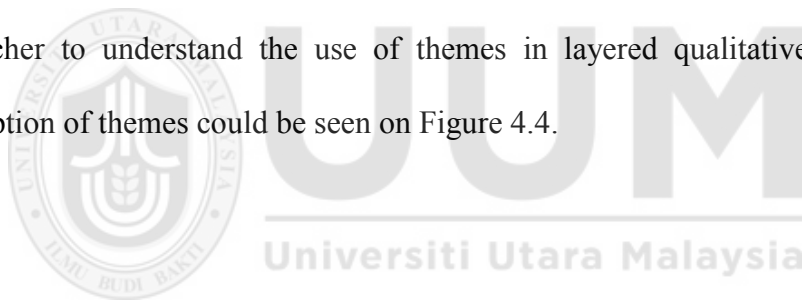
After the data collected has been organized and transcribed, the next phase is to begin the process of analysing the data.

4.5.3 Themes

To describe the data, the researcher uses themes to analyse qualitative data. According to Creswell, themes represent similar codes aggregated together to form a

major idea in the data-base and are the core element in qualitative data analysis. Similar to codes, themes have labels that typically comprise less than four words (Creswell, 2012). The initial data analyses produced 30 to 50 codes. Subsequently, these codes were reduced to seven major themes through the process of eliminating redundancies.

Next, the themes are organized into layers, from basic elementary themes to more specific ones. Layering involves representing the data using interconnected levels of themes (Creswell, 2012). The researcher subsumes minor themes within major themes and includes major themes within broader themes. The entire analysis becomes more and more complex as the researcher works upward toward broader and broader levels of abstraction. Through recognizing these layers, it helps researcher to understand the use of themes in layered qualitative analysis. This description of themes could be seen on Figure 4.4.



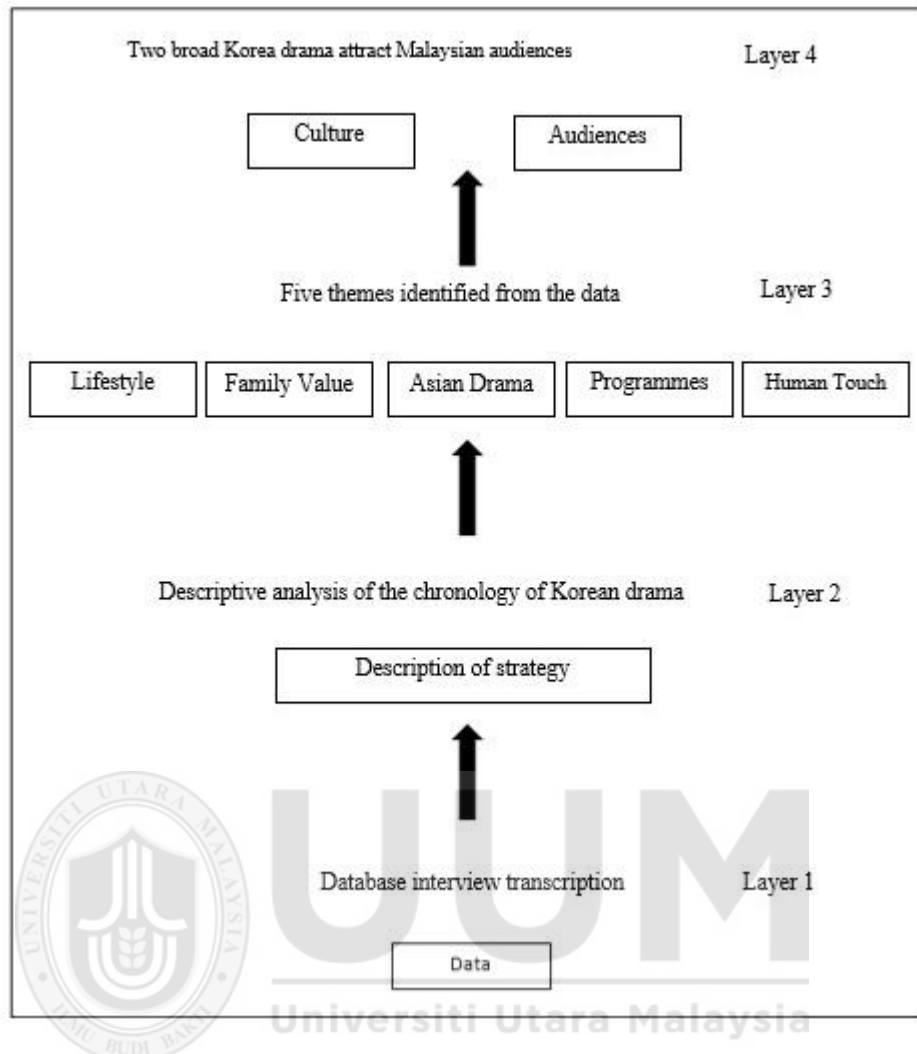


Figure 4.4 The Layer in qualitative Korean Drama in alternating audiences based on RQ

Figure 4.4 shows the process of each layer been conducted from the raw data based on research question 1. From the transcription, the data then had been analysed using the chronology of Korean drama which resulted into five themes. These five themes then been narrowed down into two themes i.e culture and audiences.

4.6 Data Verification/Trustworthiness

It is essential for researchers to ensure that during the process of data collection and analysis, their findings and interpretations are accurate (Creswell, 2014). In this research, this step is especially true when both the researchers and participants do not

communicate with the same native language. The responses provided by the participants may be interpreted differently by the researcher due to differences in slangs and culture. Validating findings can be done by determining the accuracy or credibility of the findings through strategies such as triangulation member checking or external audit (Creswell, 2014).

4.6.1 Member Checking

This process involves one or more participants in checking data accuracy. The findings are shown to the participants to check for accuracy (either in writing or verbally). These checks are also to ensure that the messages conveyed by the participants have been correctly interpreted (Creswell, 2014).

This practice of checking by members also ensures the quality of the study. The participants are provided with a summary and interpretation of the findings and they will be invited to provide feedback. If they feel that anything is amiss, they can make corrections to the interpretations so that they are representative of their thoughts (Daymon & Holloway, 2011 as cited in Klenke, 2008). Daymon and Holloway (2011) asserted that this process avoids misinterpretation of the interviewee's words whilst facilitating the researcher's understanding and interpretation of the data.

To avoid misinterpreting the information given by the participants during the interview, the researcher has sent back the organized and analysed data based from the participants' transcription to the participants itself so that they can validate the data. This was done once the researcher had completed writing the summary of data.

The data is sent in through email and they respond within two weeks as agreed and mark as endorsement.

The intertextuality of Korean drama media strategy is manifested into two themes, culture and audiences. The research findings (see chapter 5) illustrate the themes taken from the interviewee's personal narrative. The interviewees present based on their duties and responsibilities in the work and experience over the years since the outbreak of the Korean drama success.

In order to clarify the data obtained is validated and verified, researcher has conducted pragmatic validity process. Pragmatic validity is a process to look into the validity of the data obtained through different perspective from different point of view. Due to that, four participants from Malaysian creative industries expert been chosen to discuss the finding obtained from the view of Malaysian creative industry. This approach is important to verify the validity of the issue discussed. It involved two Malaysian drama's productions, a Media Prima Brand Management Officer and a Senior Associate Compliance & Presentation Astro Malaysia. They are qualified and experienced in their respective fields.

The data that obtained had been discussed further with Malaysian participants according to the research question. The idea was to verify the originality of data and also to discussed the issues on Malaysian point of view. It was an important part as they provide a view on the phenomenon of Korean drama that happens in Malaysia.

The issues of the success of Korea drama in Malaysia will be presented and discussed in details and easy to recognize in chapter 6. This discussion will be further continued with a view of Malaysia participants based on the arguments from the Korean participants. With some carefully descriptions of this study eventually dismantle the strategy of Korea drama in Malaysia and also the reasons of its successes.



CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

This present chapter presents the study's findings by reporting analysis of data collected from three sets of in-depth interviews. The qualitative data was transcribed and the researcher used Nvivo (version 8) software for organizing the data.

The three stages of coding were employed in this research, namely, open coding, axial coding and selective coding as a data analysis method (Creswell, 2012). The analysis involved looking at the transcript sentence by sentence or in a group that represents the main idea. To simplify and effectively manage the voluminous data, a code, which also acts as an indicator in this study was given to each idea. The process subsequently identified more than 40 items of indicators, all of which were then were combined for axial coding, to create 15 abstract concepts. Finally, selective coding was conducted to organize the categories into one central idea.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) stated that the researcher needs to be creative in gathering, comparing and analysing data. The researcher is responsible for indicating the main ideas gathered from the participants' responses, and they are to be compared, connected and develop the themes.

The focus of this chapter is to assess the vital media strategies of Korean television dramas, with particular reference to Malaysia, as constructed by Korean media. The Korean wave will be discussed in depth together with the previous findings. Interviews with Korean media representatives will provide a space to explore deeper

the Korean television drama strategy for Malaysian audience. Starting with an understanding of the theme of the previous findings, followed by in-depth interviews findings and subsequently with the exploration of both previous and new findings. An excellent citation from the participant will be included for clear understanding. The first research finding will start with a previous understanding of the culture and culture proximity theory.

5.1 Culture

Culture is inextricably woven into consumer behaviour. Cultural orientation has a significant effect on thinking, the process of persuasion (Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997), and the pattern of one's emotions (Markus & Kitayama, 1994 as cited in Hung et. al., 2011).

It is thus suggested that culture has a vital role in forming relationships, creating networks and adaptation in the global market (Fang, 2001; Tornroos and Miller, 1993). In fact, Fletcher & Fang (2006) argued that through cultural exchanges, the culture of a nation also changes. The change is a result of subtle influences through information exchange, media influences, the response to different cultural influences by different age groups, changes in political and economic circumstances, changes in social attitudes such as those towards gender and via the assimilation process.

For Kim & Kang, (2000) there exists a better balance between in media and cultural interchange than in the 1990s in many aspects, including import/export quantities of media content and services.

Similarly, (Ching, 2000; Iwabuchi, 2002) asserted once films, fashion, pop music, and television programs are marketed internationally, the local forms of culture and sensibilities are duly affected and changed. Popular culture, thus, acts as a major vehicle to promote cultural globalization (Yoshimoto, 2003).

Thomas and Ford (1995) as cited in Fletcher and Feng (2006) tried to explain that culture impacts on actors in the network by promoting the implicit norms for acceptable behaviour. However, Anthony Giddens (1995) as cited in Servaes and Lie (2003), suggested that humans want, or maybe need, a place to belong to, but that at the same time they want to reach out to what is found outside this 'place'. To human beings, wanting a place where they feel a sense of belonging is natural.

In communication, the idea of cultural proximity was first regarded important in deciding what is noteworthy (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Trepte, 2003). The term sheds light on why consumers may embrace or reject programs (Straubhaar, 1991, 1997), often used to explain why certain television programs are selected and enjoyed (Hoskin, McFayden & Finn, 1997; Straubhaar, 1991; Trepte, 2003). As claimed by Trepte (2003), cultural proximity explains buying decisions as well as media production and usage.

According to Straubhaar (2003) cultural proximity is regarded as the inclination or preference for media products that are most similar to one's culture. It is largely used to describe the drawing power of foreign and domestic media in an international context.

Cultural proximity is also multi-dimensional. Thus, it has been described as existing on multiple levels and associated with the different layers of the individual audience's identity, including geographic, cultural, religious, and ethnic, amongst others (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005 as cited in Straubhaar, 2007). Moreover, most of these factors are co-founded with language, so their exact role in producing proximity effects is often difficult to sort out. However, it is generally believed that when the population have access to culturally diverse media materials, most will prefer media that resemble their own or are similar.

Park and Hwang (2002) as cited in Trepte (2008) administered a study investigating how cultural proximity may affect the imports of television programs to South Korea. They assumed that television programs referring to the audiences' needs in terms of cultural interests have a better chance of being broadcasted.

To explore the Korean television dramas in attracting Malaysian audiences, this study will assess the role of culture and to understand how Korean dramas became so popular in relation to Asian sentiments.

From the findings, the emerging themes were identified in relation to the research questions. Research question is related to data collection that explores the Malaysian audiences' attraction to Korean drama. Two major themes, culture and audience, were identified to answer research question one (RQ1) as shown by Figure 5.1.

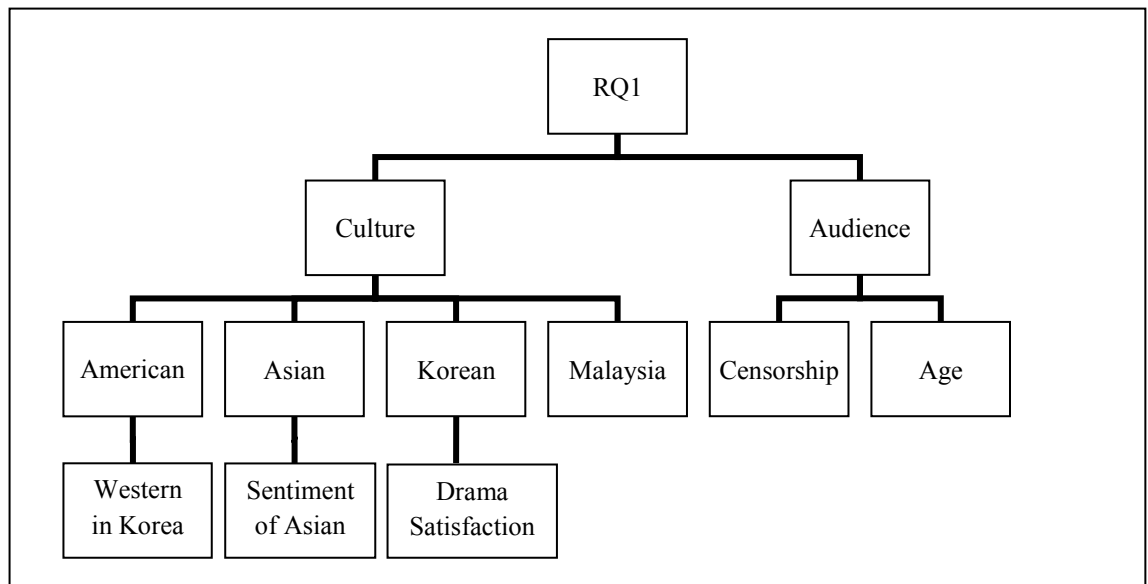


Figure 5.1 Research Question 1

The culture theme was further sub-divided into four sub-themes, namely: a) American, b) Asian, c) Korean, and; d) Malaysian while the audience theme was sub-divided into two (2) i.e. Censorship and Age.

5.1.1 American

For a long period of time, American dramas have been dominating the global drama production that influenced audiences to watch the portrayals of their modern and sophisticated culture. On the other hand, Korean dramas represent a more homogeneous, typifying conventional forms of episodes and series (Mittell, 2006). In respect to that, American and Korean TV dramas can each be seen to have their own distinctive features in their narrative strategy. This is because American dramas are more diversified in their genres that include domestic sitcom, crime thrillers, medical drama and others such as horror and science fiction (Hoppen-stand, 2009). Meanwhile, Korean dramas primarily present romantic dramas as their most popular genre, especially romantic tragedy (Jiang & Leung, 2012).

Montréal et. al., (2004), identified the three value orientations that are typical of the Asian. The first is 'harmony' that translates to mean that Asian culture can adapt to new environment, although it has strict morals. Second, in terms of action, Asian countries value *‘bǎng’*, meaning there is a fondness for cooperation, compensation in the future, the life in organizations and the environment. Lastly, the Asians value public space which is closely associated with relationships.

In contrast, Western cultures are pictured differently. Western individual encourages facial expressivity whereby considers eye contact as polite and sincere. They tend to employ more direct speech and are more attuned to facial and semantic information during their social interactions (Ju, 2010). These distinct communicative practices, reinforced by years of culture-specific learning, may well contribute to differences in how Asian and Western cultures attend to and assign meaning to socio-emotional cues encountered in different communication channels (Liu, Rigoulot, & Pell, 2015).

This made Montréal et. al., (2004), pointed out that plots that emanate from Asian culture also have programs that offer more harmonious endings instead of antagonism and friction. They added, "even the story line that presents competitiveness might be mixed with cooperation in the ending. This trait is to put stress on *‘bǎng’* that Asians adopt not the story line that places the triumph in sharp conflicts but the story line that reinforces Asian values through dynamic turns of a story. Also, Asians have a preference for calmly watching the development of the situation without involving positively in the situation so they prefer to watch love stories rather than political stories" (Montréal et. al., 2004).

"Asian has its own value of practise and therefore the exposure of American dramas brings an uncomfortable and dissatisfied feeling" (Participant 1).

In fact, Shim (2010), once pointed out that sharing similar cultures markedly separates Korean programmes from Western ones, and why American programs are unable to present them.

The participant is of the view that Korean dramas present Asian values and beliefs, and thus closely simulate the Asian way of life.

"These dramas commonly touch the daily life aspects of Asians such as family-oriented storylines that differ from the American style" (Respondent 1).

This statement is in-line with Hanaki, et al., 2007; Chua, 2004, 2008; Lin & Tong, 2008; Mori, 2008, who explored the reasons for Asia's attraction to Korean drama pointed out that these dramas send heartfelt, emotional messages that are not generally conveyed by Western TV dramas.

5.1.2 Asian

Asian culture reflects the interplay of historical events and life experiences of the locals (Ju, 2010). The culture is also regarded as a recipient orientation (Leung, 1992) and its people are flexible in their responses. They are more accepting of uncertainties and external disturbances and regard these as natural phenomena (Lamposki & Emden, 1996 as cited in Fletcher & Feng, 2006), often coping with situations either individually or communally (Fletcher and Fang, 2006).

Montréal, Martin, and Montréal, (2004) asserted that Asian culture and Confucian values are similar. The characteristics of the Asian cultural market based on the different value orientations can be summarized as:

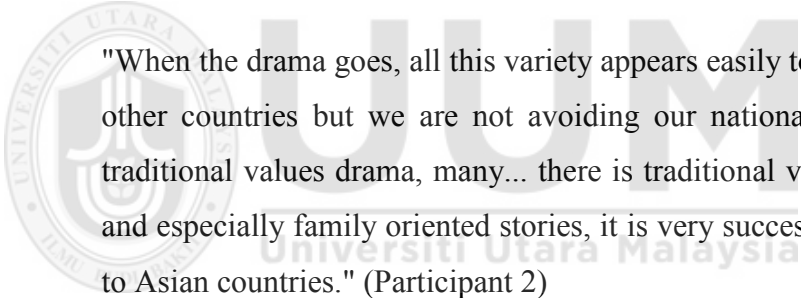
- i) Harmony: This is a basic value that is adaptable to new environments, though it is associated with strict morals;
- ii) Cooperation, compensation in the future, the life in organizations and the environment: Time is used to solve agenda and issues positively; and,
- iii) Public space: Order, hierarchy and deductive-oriented cultures that emphasize abstract thinking and the reality of ideas, moral values, theories, and principles are valued (Montréal, Martin, & Montréal, 2004).

In essence, the Korean Wave TV drama producers have managed to highlight the cultural characteristics of Asians and filtered unfavorable Western values. They have also successfully mingled Korea's traditional Confucian beliefs with the dominant modern images in many Asian countries (Chua, 2004; Lin & Tong, 2008). Additionally, these television producers and their crews use skillful, sophisticated techniques to portray contemporary Asians in producing emotionally sensitive and stylish drama (Chua, 2004; Hanaki, et al., 2007; Ju, 2010).

"Korean drama actually is kind of family oriented drama. So, not all dramas are focusing on dramas but many of them are focusing on such family value, Asian value. I think such values are the ones that every viewer in Asian countries including Malaysia are having in common. So, I think family values can also appeal to viewers to Malaysian viewers as well and then, I think that the quality of dramas are great... and then... I think we do not

have much violence in our drama... and then,... family value, small love, small violence, high quality of productions and such elements can be...Korean try to produce a drama that something touch the Asian hearts, something really close. Things in common. So, those values can be,.. can also be shared with viewers in Malaysia as well." (Participant 1)

Korean dramas contain similar values with other cultures, and were judiciously selected to feed the Asian appetite. In this case, family values and culture play an important role towards the acceptance of audiences thus leading to their success. This argument is further reinforced by the second participant.



"When the drama goes, all this variety appears easily to all other countries but we are not avoiding our national or traditional values drama, many... there is traditional value and especially family oriented stories, it is very successful to Asian countries." (Participant 2)

While some of the traditional, family values are also reflected in certain western storylines, audiences feel more comfortable watching Korean dramas as they resonate better with Asian cultures, making them understand the storylines easily. Also, Korean dramas have been successful in Malaysia as they fill audiences with a sense of remembering the old feeling (Participant 2).

Korean productions believe that Asians share common values in life. For example, certain popular dramas such as "Winter Sonata" were initially made for local viewers

but it rapidly became popular to other Asian countries including Malaysia as it has the same Asian value.

"The producer is very popular, the producer who is responsible for the making of this programme but I don't think, he's..., when he made such drama I don't think he is targeting Malaysian viewers or Singaporean viewers but I think they just put some values and then, they made a good storyline and then, show this programme in South Korea first and then most of viewers do like watching this programme and then, it spread to... you know Asian viewers and then, some company bought this company and put it on their channel to local viewers and then, they also do like because that means... I think storyline is important" (Participant 3)

Korean dramas' producers believe that it is crucial to add some values that are understandable and can be related to Asian audiences. They feel that they have to produce something that is enjoyable for the audiences to watch with an added human touch. By carrying out this thinking, Korean drama is not just suitable to the local viewers but also Asians alike.

"Most of the successful products, the common one has these three things, number one is family story, second one is about love and third one is about something overcoming the difficulties. These three has appeal much to many people in the world they keep very enjoyable way. They enjoy the stories. Then there is a human based, touched the human beings, the values for example like, 'Jewel in the Palace' is focus about successful women in the

difficult and historical environment and background and also 'Winter Sonata' is about relationship and also like family drama. Especially very popular in China, when they say family drama they may see their loss value, they miss this kind of values and they like to... and satisfied because of the realities in there. This are the actual motive why the people like Korean dramas..." (Participant 4)

Undoubtedly, the participants admitted that their reasons for accepting Korean TV dramas were based on their Asian sentiments.

5.1.3 Korean Culture

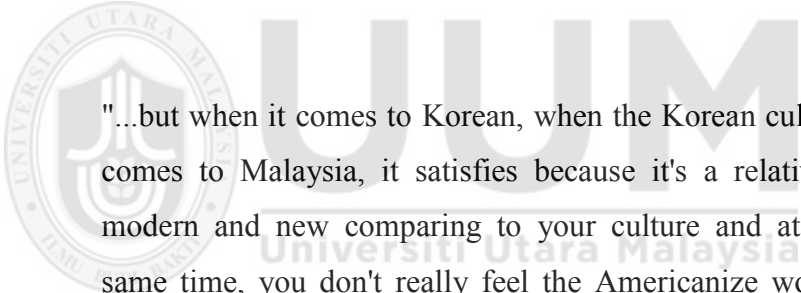
In focusing on Korean culture, the participants show the incredible passion of Korean dramas on culture. He mentioned that Korean culture is somewhat an incorporation of culture between Japan and China. It has also been able to be modernized without becoming too westernized. According to the participants, the Korean culture has been capable to feed the large appetites of Asian viewers.

Korean culture can be represented by the widely shared values of Koreans. Choe (2000) and Duk (2003), described, values are handed down from previous generations, and they caused people to act according to the existing values, persuading them to believe that this is the right and proper way to act.

The concept of Korean culture as explained by Choes (2002a) and Duk (2003) is on the shared values of Koreans. As such, he mentioned about the value of high collectivism, authoritarianism (gwonwijuui), high anxiety, long-term orientation, and high enthusiasm (sinmyeong) as the core of and unique to Korean culture.

"... In Korean culture, we have our own traditional value and traditional uniqueness but we also have a variety of culture which we do not observe locally but still observing but we not sabotaging but we are all aware of the variety of culture at the same time not coming to our culture. This kind of things can express in global I mean express in our drama which can appeal to many and can be acceptable to other countries". (Participant 1)

In short, the values of Korean culture can be shown clearly in their dramas. Due to this, the participant feels that the culture can be shared and accepted by other Asian countries such as Malaysia. This reflects that Korean is sharing their culture with others whilst observing others as reciprocity.



"...but when it comes to Korean, when the Korean culture comes to Malaysia, it satisfies because it's a relatively modern and new comparing to your culture and at the same time, you don't really feel the Americanize world. Because it's a new and different part of the world. We in some way share the same Asian culture." (Participant 2)

Despite Korean culture being new to Malaysian audiences, they are able to accept of Korean culture because they are used to diversity found in Malaysian culture.

5.1.4 Malaysian Mix Culture

Undoubtedly, Malaysia is a unique country with various races and diversified cultures. The Korean media believe that with these advantages, Malaysians are more open to other cultures and capable to accept different perspectives. According to the

participants, these are the elements that the Malaysian audiences could accept and enjoy while watching Korean television dramas besides of its storyline.

An analysis on the finding of all participants above found that people would be interested to watch dramas that are more closely related to their own cultures even though they communicate with different languages and have to rely on subtitles in order to understand the storyline. Yet, the success of Korean dramas in Malaysia shows that language is clearly not a barrier for Malaysians to watch Korean dramas, but rather its similarity to real people that touches dominantly on human sensitivity such as lifestyle, value and family that has propels Korean dramas success in Malaysia. As stated by Ryoo (2007), Asian viewers are able to internalize better to South Korean television shows as their dramas are usually based on family matters, filial piety in the era of technological advancements and often portrays Confucian values. Therefore, he believed that South Korean famous culture is way acceptable and related to Asian viewers.

Korean programs satisfy Asian audiences' emotional needs by being easy to assimilate to a similar life style, cultural proximity and expressiveness. Korean dramas had been proven to successfully fill the 'emptiness' feeling that could not be filled by Western dramas. Korean dramas have been realistically able to associate its audiences' needs in terms of culture interests. As a result, all of these factors have contributed to a better chance of Korean dramas to be broadcasted in Malaysia. The preference of Korean programs over other types of shows indicated that Asians expressed sympathy for Asian cultural frames including family morals, highly morality and love and sacrifice. As Lee (2007) as cited in Lee (2011) stated that local

audiences feel familiar with culturally similar products compared to unfamiliar ones. Thus, it is hardly surprising that Korean TV dramas and films are successful as Asians feel closer to the Korean culture rather than Western ones (Lee, 2007 as cited in Lee, 2011).

To further understand on the reasons of why Korean dramas have been able to attract Malaysian audiences, the next discussion would focus on the audiences in supporting cultural arguments presented earlier.

5.2 Audiences

Audience involvement has been seen as an important construct of media uses and effects and as a characteristic of proactive audiences that purposefully seek and experience the media to fulfil certain expectations and needs (Riley and Van Doren, 1992; Riley et al., 1998).

Fiske's (1987) defined that audiences are a broad series of groups, who is not of a homogeneous mass, hence, they make an active choice to view, read and interpret visual media texts and images including television in order to produce from them meanings that connect with their own social and cultural values and experiences. (Kim & Wang, 2012; Fiske's; 1987). It should be noted that a succesful strategy often used is the linking of the storyline with audiences' histories, social environments, aesthetics and culture. As Huang (2009) pointed out, the entertainment value is important for the viewer.

It is understood that Korean dramas also prioritise the sensitivities of the Asian audiences so as not to offend them, and this includes respecting Islamic countries such as Malaysia.

5.2.1 Censorship

As such, the participant believe that the theme that works well with Malaysian audiences is to abide to stricter censorship with lower sexual and lower violence contents. This is because Muslims constitute the dominant Malaysian population and their lives are lived according to Islamic values. The participant believes that to ensure that that the audience can enjoy and are comfortable watching Korean drama, it is essential that these productions respect other religions and audiences' beliefs.

As part of the censorship, age is also a focus on fulfilling the needs of the audience. Understanding the needs and spirit in one age is an advantage in producing Korean dramas.

5.2.2 Age

The statement above is also in-line with the second participant. He added that the attraction of Korean dramas may also depend on the audiences' age. For instance, if the audiences are over 30 years old, they would most probably be inclined to watch dramas. Meanwhile, audiences between the ages of 20 to 30 years old as well as teenagers, may be more attracted to watch variety shows. Hence, they need to identify the types of drama that are best suited for all age levels and that can be enjoyed by everyone.

As summarized above, based on the audiences' analysis, it shows that the interest of audience is closely related to the culture of the country, the sensitivity of the country as well as the trend of age needs. Here, it is clear that culture influences the audience even from the point of belief or ages. All four participants (two from KBS and two from SBS) had mentioned that culture and understanding the needs of the audiences are a key element in the acceptance of Korean dramas production in Malaysia. Korean dramas exude a sense of familiarity and have a way of stirring up emotions and sentiments that are easily related to.

As mentioned above by Cunningham, et al. (1998), "Audiences will first seek the pleasure of recognition of their own culture in their program choices," and "Programs will be produced to satisfy this demand, relative to the wealth of the market" (Oba, 2007). The audience may also use the lessons taken from the dramas and include it in their lives even though the lessons or meaning may not be very obvious (Fiske, 1989: 74). Therefore, Malaysian audiences pay great attention to the aspects that are related to Asian cultures portrayed by Korean dramas that has not been served by western productions.

Moving on, from the raw data obtained the researcher able to identify several dimensions which significantly reflect the second research question. These emerging themes can explain and answer the question in RQ2.

5.3 Strategy

In research question two (RQ2), four (4) dimensions of strategy that described the approaches in promoting Korean television drama were identified in the data. The

dimensions are categorized as follows: a) history, b) economy, c) government, and d) systematic approach.

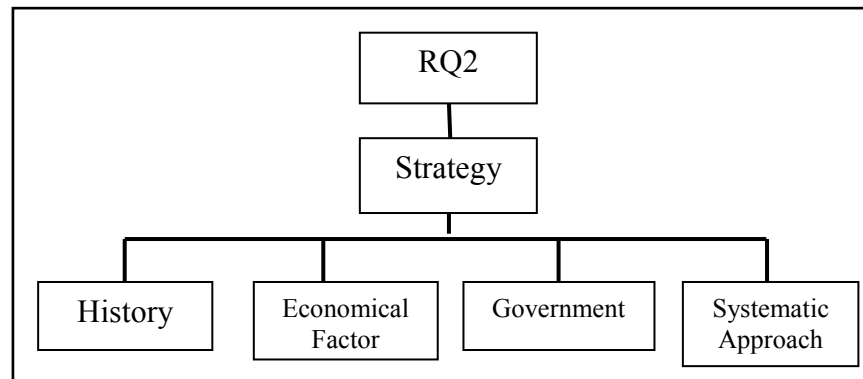


Figure 5.2 Research Question 2

According to two of the participants (participant 3 and 4), as a starting point for identifying the Korean media strategy, it is vital to understand the history and background of the Korean nation in order to grasp a clear picture of the whole scenario.

5.3.1 History

Although Korea has been compared to Africa in the past, it has undergone a dramatic transformation in the last 50 years, one that would normally have occurred within a century for most nations (Paik, 2001). The nation has had a volatile national history as alluded to by Paik (2001), who noted the ills the country suffered under Japanese colonialism for over 35 years. During this time, the Japan tried to turn the Koreans into Japanese. When Colonialism ended, the country was ravaged by the Korean War, which further plundered the nation's economic and social infrastructure (Paik, 2001).

One of the participants from KBS (Korean Broadcasting System) expresses that Korean has a very long and tragic history which has never been able to be told in deep and wholeheartedly to the world.

"We went through the war just like Vietnam ...we went to the war ...and we are in some degrees, overcoming all kinds of, you know burden and tragedies coming the poverty and everything."

he then said,

"...and still we come from the...you know, like the North Korea that's a big trap. So like a big story and drama" (Participant 3).

The participant recalled that as a Korean, they wanted to be known to the world of whom they are and where they came from.

"....we were mistreated. If we go back to like, 200 years ago, Korea was not well-known. But Japan was well known because they open the port right away. So they got all benefits. China is well-known because it is super big and super rich right. So it's well-known. But Korea is not well-known and we had the like you know, very bad destiny. We had lots of war here. That's because we were not well known. If war, don't care about us that's really bad. I mean like we have to say something about us and what's going on here. And what's going on in North Korea too".

To draw a clearer picture, the participant continued,

"...and in a psychologically reason some mentality Korea, Korean people I think they want, they have kind of a lingering feeling saying they're mad that they were treated that way badly by Japan and sometimes badly treated by China and communist."

He then further explained,

"If I say this you're going to laugh... but in 1990s South Korea said badly about Japan. Japan is nothing. No other country in the world says that Japan is nothing. Only for South Korean can say Japan is nothing. Why? Because in 300-400 years ago, they were like, if you know history, they were far behind. Then we send them, we gave them philosophy, culture, lots of technique, technology for example. They cannot even make a ceramic. So there, we send a lot of people to Japan. Of course when they had the war they took our you know, masters to Japan too. But they're always behind. So if we say in 1990s, oh Japan is nothing but most probably of the world would say Korean people are crazy. But we say that because we know the culture" (Participant 3).

The situation is even sadder when their ancestors had to go through all of the suffering. However, they believe that someday they will progress far ahead than Japan.

"...actually Japan got back their economy when Korean had war. Through the Korean War, Japan's economy grew a lot. So we didn't have such a progression because Japanese is better than Korea in economic power. And yet we still have war in North Korea, ...it is still a big burden. Economically, you know, and socially it is a lot of burden

and to be honest, I don't think Japan and China do want our unification. They don't want it. Why? Because if we have it, we can be a threat to them. They want us to be separated and suffer. So, Korean people want people to know, want the world to know about us" (Participant 3).

According to Paik (2001), Korean had to rebuild its strength from scratch in almost all aspects. It began vigorous efforts to catch up with the developed countries around the world, economically and culturally (Paik, 2001).

"So, they want us to suffer, something like we went through hell but now we stand and we are growing up. That's the main reason that trigger our... you know our... what is call...national identity. We wanted to be better otherwise" (Participant 3).

Another participant from Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) agreed with the history. She personally viewed that Korean and Japanese history plays a vital role in shaping Korean broadcasting strategies. She, also stressed that there were many and varied Korean characters of history and conflict.

"I think it relates to Korean history background. I mean historical and cultural background, Korean has a lot of conflicts. First, is the contemporary conflict with the North Korea democracy, the communism conflict. Second, is the religious conflict, Korean is a country where a lot of religions co-exists. So in Korea, the religion I mean Buddhism and Catholic and Christian and also you know, the communism it's all basically co-exists even Islam as well."

She continued

"The temporary conflict is with the North Korea. Korea is the only country that has different ideologist. The foreign ideologist, the foreign comes to Korea, variety comes to Korea. Korean as you know observe all the religions and also Korea very unique kind of nationality to foreign things when it comes" (Participant 4).

She observed the two lessons taught by the ideological conflict as being, firstly, to deeply understand the human will and second, to acknowledge the others' view of life and their beliefs.

Due to the hard upbringing and the past suffering that Koreans have gone through, both participants believed that it is time that Koreans need to come out and stand up for their own future. In particular, their history brought out their strengths and empowered them to rise, fight, and rebuild the country so that their people can once again rise above hardship and poverty.

"So that's why people are... in my opinion, people are interested in knowing more about South Korea," (Participant 2).

Apart from the tragic history, the economy has also drawn a big impact on Koreans. By recognizing the Korean economy, a clear understanding of the Korean media broadcasting business and strategy can be achieved.

5.3.2 Economy

South Korea does not have many resources except for its arable land (one fifth) in the southwest (Postlethwaite, 1988) and other raw materials such as Tungsten, limestone, and lead. Its water resources enable the production of hydro-electric power but besides these, the country relies heavily on imports, such as oil, iron ore, copper, gold, and silver. Agriculture also serves as the main income source for Koreans despite having the world's smallest average farm area per household. (California Department of Education, 1992). (Paik, 2001).

In 1953, the per capita income was only 1% of the Organization of Economic and Comparative Development (OECD) average, but in 1992, it had grown to be almost one-third of that average (OECD, 1998). Since then, South Korea has become the 11th largest trading country and major exporters of electronics, cars, clothing, petrochemicals, machinery, ships, and steel (Hwang, 1993; Song, 1997).

Related to the above mentioned, participants admitted that to be able to sustain a living in Korea, it requires a strong will.

"Korean is not a country that come with a lot of resources but Korean development is based on the people's hard work. So, whatever industry Korean people tend to develop about their field, so you know, they try their best to present; for example, actor and actress professionally in music or any other involvement in drama. They try to... you know, there is no limit to make better, they work really hard to make everything come out best."
(Participant 4)

However, according to the KBS participant, since everyone is working hard to live; they are forced to compete with each other to survive.

"You know, the Korean content industry is not simple. You know, not only the broadcaster, KBS, SBS and other television channel. We also have the production base but a lot of productions, also now we also have other players. They all are content related corporations. I mean you know, before that our competitor you know, MBC or SBS or other broadcasters, we have a lot of cable TV. They're all targeting other countries overseas because the Korean market is small and we cannot survive without selling our content to the world. So, there you know, expanding."
(Participant 2)

Due to the situation, Korean is inadvertently facing with an economy conflict. The conflict arises when everyone is looking and searching on how to make profit and expanding their businesses to overseas market as their local market is deemed insufficient to sustain profits.

"We are dealing with conflict which is about economical conflict because this country is building very fast, quiet you know fast" (Participant 2).

Hence, its people realise the need to be their best and work diligently so as to generate and increase income. Similarly, television stations are also aware of the need to produce programs are of international standing. These program must create demand, universally attractive so that they may be globally marketed. As stated by the participant 4,

"The revenues they get from all the viewership is all shared between media, production and TV station altogether. But nowadays, the platform is unlimited like mobile, online based and internet based so maybe certain country still they don't pay any amount for online view, it was free view but now the culture has changed to online view. Copyright issues are strongly applied in Korea. The money that they paid for watching Korean drama through online are all shared between media and Production Company and TV station whoever involve. "

During the 2000s, 'Korean Wave' rose to become an economic phenomenon that contributing significantly to Korea's national economy (Kim 2006). In due time, the wave transformed into a transnational phenomenon and was not only confined to the home country (Ravina 2009; Peichi, 2014).

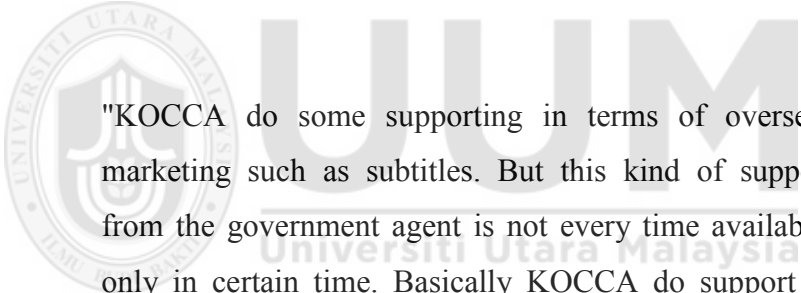
These economic developments have produced specific results. "South Korea is now the twelfth largest economy in the world, and its' entertainment companies are able to finance shows and movies with production values much higher than in most of Asia" (Ryoo, 2007, p. 140; Lee, 2011).

5.3.3 Government

When South Korea was badly hit by the Asian Financial Crisis at the end of the 20th century, the government began aggressively seeking economic opportunities through the Korean Wave phenomenon that was already developing rapidly. This involved the government in taking proactive measures to support its domestic cultural industry (Kim, 2011).

The Korean government recognizes the ripple effect caused by their vibrant range of cultural industries, ranging from film and television dramas, to gaming, animation and music. This is due to the industry's reliance on the latest developments in electronics and ICT. The ripple effect is illustrated by not only the demand from the cultural industries, but most importantly, the Wave promoted innovation in the Korean electronics and ICT industries (Kwon and Kim, 2013).

The SBS participant disclosed that the Korean government's own supporting body called Korean Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) is a government agency under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. It is responsible for governing cultural content.



"KOCCA do some supporting in terms of overseas marketing such as subtitles. But this kind of support from the government agent is not every time available, only in certain time. Basically KOCCA do support in terms of sales... maybe brochure or that kind of support and also they do support in production, and it is based on project. Let's say they do, they audit when there is a new project, drama or movie, they check through and then they can roughly calculate the production fees. KOCCA also gave loans and with lower interest so we can finish our production" (Participant 4).

Adding to that, she said that the government has some funds to help any productions to expand their business. However, the fund is very much in terms of promoting their finished production abroad.

Another participant from KBS thought that Korean productions should have the support from KOCCA as production costs require huge spending. Besides, he said that the business will provide a great return on the economy.

"There is no business like content business because once the content get hit it's a far more lucrative than the industry manufacture" (Participant 1).

The government was supportive and arranged for specific industry based financial backing for organizations in the cultural industry (MCST 2009) (Kwon & Kim, 2013). For example, from 1999 to 2003, the government gave out loaned out approximately 50 billion Korean Won to these organizations.

The overall government support was focused exclusively on the sectors that showed the most promise and potential for growth, such as films, dramas, gaming and music (MCST 2009, KOCCA 2012). The government gave comprehensive backing to these sectors including technological support, skilled workforce development, the funding of infrastructure and export aid programs. The aid provided was enabled through initiatives between quasi-governmental organizations and the private sector and were specifically designed to promote the business activities of these cultural firms (Baek 2009).

In short, it is clearly shown that the Korean government has done a lot of support and effort to help the creative industry in order to improve their economic and promoting Korean culture globally.

5.3.4 Systematic Approach

A systematic approach to foreign market entry translates in strategic planning and an effective organizational structure for the marketing function (Louter, Ouwerkerk and Bakker 1991). Shoham (1999) proposed that planning for international markets results in the identification of strategies that can enhance export performance. Even more, high performing exporters have a “desire to capitalize on the firm’s competitive advantages” (Francis and Collins-Dodd 2000, p.90). Therefore, exporting companies will design their marketing strategy in order to build sustainable competitive advantages. (Gomez and Valenzuela, 2005).

The interviews revealed that the participants did not have a comprehensive promotion strategy. They admitted that it was vital to have proper strategies but where the Korean Wave especially Korean dramas were concerned, history and self-awareness led them to practice several different approaches. As one of the KBS participants said,

"You know, we just to make our programming and then from our part we select the appropriate dramas that we think are suitable for local viewers and that's it. We are doing our job. We do not care about whatever they say about Korean drama, we just focusing on our production. If we keep doing this, then the viewers will do love to watch KBS dramas" (Participant 2).

Another participant (SBS) agreed with the statement, adding:

"No, not to promote the culture but we are Korea itself so we are doing our work and it is promoting actually. If we

had better contents it promotes the Korean culture. So, actually our whole money our media company, content media company. So our content actually promoting us, our culture" (Participant 4).

However, the information obtained can be categorized into two; namely a) experience and, b) activities.

a) Experience

The Asian culture was shaped through a series of historical events and the local living experiences of the population (Ju, 2010). According to Kraidy (2005), the "local" involves construction of socio-cultural meanings, selection of different power struggles, outcomes, and the social actions by individuals within their own system (Ju, 2010).

The participant pointed out that the hard times and circumstances experienced by the population led them to live and react accordingly.

"Actually the production company has gone through a hard time, many companies have gone through a hard time and they have a lot of experience and also because of the high competition they always pursue the better production, project or better drama."

Thus the participant elaborated further,

"They use experience to make the drama not just from nothing. You may understand why Korean drama is so preferable to Asia and other country, one thing I like to mention is that we have a strong industry development

starting from the 1970s and many other industries so they have a half century experience and also in order to understand whatever production, you have to understand the history of Korea. If you know about it you may understand that whatever production or media production any other and historically we have been always because we are in the Peninsular... and then we have those bigger countries so we have to survive and we have to be strong not be stolen and we have to struggle very hard, otherwise..., so that kind of historical background is always created to be strong and come out with our own" (Participant 4).

The challenges, bitter life experiences and historical (Jang & Paik, 2012) as well as economic crises (Paik, 2001) pushed the Korean media to a higher-level confidence to pursue excellence and compete internationally in the the creative industry. They became courageous and fearless in pursuit of success to overcome their problems.

b) Activities

According to Currás-Pérez, Ruiz-Mafé, & Sanz-Blas (2011), the audiences has a much more realistic perception of television content, and therefore once favourable social relationships have developed, their exposure to this type of program will increase, thereby favouring purchase. Besides the experiences that influenced Korean media approaches, the participant revealed the plan or activities conducted to introduce Korean dramas abroad. Such activities entail presenting actors to countries that are highly likely to become consumers of Korean drama.

Additionally, the efficiency of a production is measured by the ability to provide the latest drama to the audience. Participant of Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) explained,

"Firstly, Korean dramas are shown in South Korea and then, two or three weeks after such contents will be on KBS World because we have to put subtitling in English and it takes time. So, production team is main objective is to target Korean viewers first and then, the programming team on KBS World select which drama contents will be best suited for overseas viewers" (Participant 2).

This systematic approach adds to the strength and success of Korean media strategy. The systematic approach was created and implemented due to their previous and current hardships, struggles and pressure to survive.

From the findings, it can be said that Korean media broadcasting strategies are rooted to the national history, economics, government support and systematic approach. Notably, their rich life experiences and historical background have also contributed to their drama success. These factors have been instrumental in promoting Korean television drama.

As Hogarth (2013) said, Korean television dramas deal with universal human themes that touch the sentiments of viewers from varied cultural backgrounds. This factor explains the wide popularity and huge success of the Korean Wave and why it continues to make further inroads into other cultures (Hogarth, 2013).

The third research question reflects into two different dimensions that can be elaborated to examine the Korean media strategies to gain and maintain their popularity. Based on the interview, the result are

- i) customers and,
- ii) foreign market. As shown by Figure 5.3, this result will be discussed further as follows.

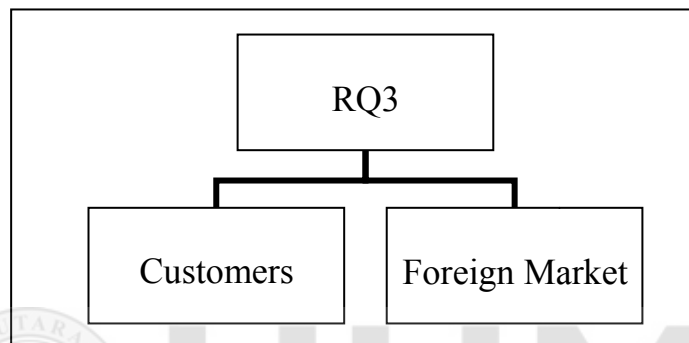


Figure 5.3 Research Question 3

5.4 Customer

Any business has the objective of creating and retaining profitable customers, and this is done by offering goods and services that are in demand or that have potential demand. The market comprises suppliers and potential consumers who share particular needs or wants and have the ability to engage in exchanges to satisfy those demands (Kotler, 1994).

It should be noted that communication with persons and customers creates an opportunity for organizations to prepare information's about their products and their services. In addition, with receiving viewpoints of their customers and persons, it is necessary to perceive the needs of market as well as the needs of themselves in a better way. (Mohammadian and Mohammadreza, 2012).

According to the KBS participant, before starting to export Korean production to Malaysia, he had an opportunity to live in Malaysia and was employed as a consultant in Malaysian Radio Television, Angkasapuri where he works closely with TV3 and Astro. He learned as much as possible on Malaysian broadcasting and explored Malaysian needs and requirements of television program. To him, it is crucial to understand the outside market such as Malaysia before venturing into any marketing strategy.

"According to them, they have also their own data on which programmes are popular from KBS World. According to them, they let me know that drama contents is very popular and the next one is variety shows and then they do not like news programme because the news programme doesn't have any subtitle also they do not understand. The most popular program is drama. It is the same with other operators in other countries such as Hong Kong and Singapore as well. Most popular programmes are dramas" (Participant 2).

Another participant from SBS added,

"Do you know how we can survive.... we have this competitive attitude, so we bring this to our edge of the world market and sure we can beat. We also do a lot of research in the R&D department and we are also very flexible in making and we do have a lot of pre-production study" (Participant 3).

Various scholars (e.g., Boddewyn and Hansen, 1977; Hill and Still, 1984; Jain, 1989; Walters, 1986; Wind and Douglas, 1972), stated that cultural differences will

influence acceptance of marketing standardization. In looking at product characteristics, the varied national cultures possibly affected product adaptation decisions, specifically consumer products. This is because the differences in people's behaviour and thought processes (Oba, 2007), are based on cultural norms which encompasses all social activities (Cateora and Graham, 2001). Due to that, the participants highly appreciate and value customers' opinion and needs. For them, all the requests and suggestions of the customer is a major task to tackle for the Korean media.

"We accept their opinions and we will deliver such suggestions to the production teams and then,...they also request some on-site promotion events and marketing events. They actually love Korean Actors to be in ASTRO and meet their fans in Malaysia. They also want promotions. Then, we will deliver such suggestions to our production team as well" (Participant 2).

Consequently, preparing a product to suit customer's needs will result in increased sales and influence (Mohammadian and Mohammadreza, 2012). Therefore, to captivate Malaysian audiences, Korean media broadcasting made an effort by providing a translation in Malay or English language to every drama that aired in Malaysia. Customer is a major part in any marketing and it is essential to review their needs and requirements from time to time.

5.5 Foreign market

In this part of interview, the first participants point out the imbalance of Korean economy production. He said that the Korean local market is small whereas Korean

productions are increasing every year. Therefore, it forces them to venture out for other markets outside Korea.

"We can't avoid the export to other country...we have to make our drama more qualified or more quality... we have to export because in order to live we have to export our production" (Participant 1).

Another participant added that,

"In Korea the market is so small and then that is not enough to cover all. So, we have to explore more market to cover all the expenses. Our living expenses are getting higher and higher and there is no other way than export. This happen not limited to the media production, same goes with other industries in Korea. We have to make it more vary and have to secure the market overseas. So we have to basically explore the market not only Asian country or China, we have to go to Middle-East, Europe and we have to explore lots more of the bigger market. In pre-production period, normally we prepare everything and consider all the overseas market from the very beginning" (Participant 4).

Korean drama is seen as an example of successful packaging of national culture into a commodity to generate profit from overseas markets and thus increase national competitiveness in the global economy (Yang, 2008). The second participant continued,

"There are no more revenues making from local so we go for overseas market. But if we go overseas we cannot simply put our things. We need to know what the audience like, when they promoting, not just Korean star singing,

we have to maybe employ the local producers to arrange the K-pop being observed by the local audience and we have to carefully decide how they like to enjoy their Korean content publically. In order to make our business a success, we may have to carefully design our marketing..." (Participant 2).

As suggested by Ju (2010), in order to advance Korean media capabilities and broaden its business in foreign markets, the media corporations must seize the opportunity to form strategic cooperative and cultural partnerships. The KBS participant noted,

"Currently, we can divide into two, there is place where Korean Wave is strong and there are countries that Korean Wave is not that strong. In Asia, I think Korean Wave is very strong compare to the western countries especially Europe, Middle-East and Africa, the Korean Wave is not that strong. But for the countries where the Korean Wave is strong, we are focusing on getting more income from those countries but for the countries that Korean Wave is not that strong, at this stage, we are trying to expand our coverage in those countries" (Participant 2).

In view of the succesful exports of Korean dramas, there has been various commercial tactics targeting foreign media markets. The Korean television industry for example, has launched a systemic business strategy so as to make headway into broader foreign markets. In this case, the KBS participant stressed out that their first strategy is to place Korean channels in other targeted countries for free to create a familiarization among foreign audiences. When there is a response and attention from the country, then only payment will be imposed to continue the program.

"For example, we sell the ... this is newly launching KBS Drama. We try to sell to other countries but at the same time, we're doing channel business as well. Channel business is you may regard KBS World. Because we regard this as a pipeline to KBS World. Because they have easy access. They just turn on the TV they can approach the Korean programmes" (Participant 1).

Furthermore, companies that export and follow “pure differentiation strategies” have proven that they outperform those with “cost leadership strategy”, especially in the case of exporters in developed country markets (Aulakh, Kotabe and Teege 2000). Companies practicing the differentiation strategy were interested in creating products or services that are perceived as unique (Gomez and Valenzuela, 2005).

Interestingly, Korean productions have been willing to take a risk to implement their strategy. In order to be known in Malaysia, the first participant admitted that in Malaysia they have implemented a different approach whereby they initially paid Malaysian channel such as ASTRO to broadcast their program.

"For transmitting KBS content and then 2 or 3 years later and we negotiate them. So we don't pay transmission but we don't get also, also we don't ask money for our content. Because so, it's the same. They send the transmission for free and we provide content for free. Now, we're getting revenue from them. You send out, we provide our content but you have to pay each year. So we don't pay anything to them."

He added the reason of doing so is,

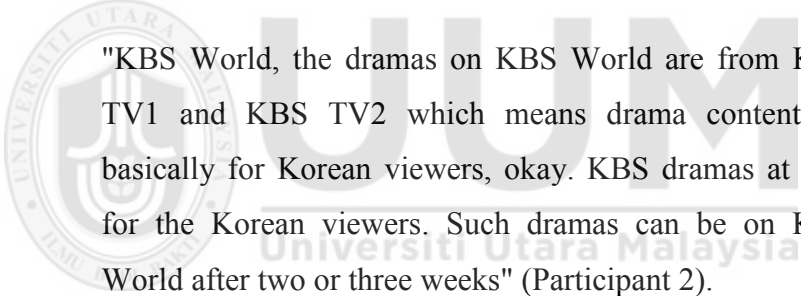
"Malaysia market itself is not that big. However, it's a very symbolic place is you know, truly Asia, you're really a strategic centre of the Asia and when we get the Malaysian market then that means we include, we cover Malay, Malaysian, Bahasa including Indonesia influence, your culture is influence by Indonesia which is a huge market. And also, the Chinese, the Chinese they have a big buying power. Also Indian, Indian market which is very difficult but it's a big potential and Malaysian Indian market is little bit tough. So at this sense, Malaysia is a very, for us it's very important and this is kind of the gate for us to approach the whole Asia. Very symbolic place. And the transportation also other commercial centre" (Participant 2).

This is in line with Bello, Urban and Verhage (1991) statement, export channel structure refers to various structural characteristics such as alternative channels modes, administrative contracts and associated relationships, which arise from these channel arrangements (Gomez & Valenzuela, 2005).

Korean television stations also strategically employ foreign media facilities and investments as part of their business initiatives in the regional media sphere, emphasizing their keen awareness and the importance of business partnerships with neighbouring media firms and markets. Moreover, sharing regional media facilities – programming facilities, advanced technology, financial investment, and expert production crews – is considered a precious asset for the Korean television industry itself. (Ju, 2010). The participant (SBS) replied,

"There is no strategy, no centralised strategy. In order to capture global market was to join venture, join production. It's not more on strategy it's more on solution. In order to have the worldwide drama, it's very difficult even in Asia production it is always limited to some specific countries. So the only way is to have a joint production" (Participant 4).

The strategy used in internationally marketing Korean programs is to customize the programs that are sold to local television systems. This tailored marketing of the Korean television industry varies depending on the size and degree of development present in any specific local television system. (Ju, 2010). The KBS participant noted,



"KBS World, the dramas on KBS World are from KBS TV1 and KBS TV2 which means drama contents is basically for Korean viewers, okay. KBS dramas at first for the Korean viewers. Such dramas can be on KBS World after two or three weeks" (Participant 2).

For Korean dramas to achieve and maintain popularity in Malaysia, it was vital to obtain the understanding of Malaysian audiences. With the knowledge that Korean drama is the most popular genre among other Korean programs, Korean broadcasting decided to increase more of the dramas in order to fulfil Malaysian's interests such as romantic and mellow dramas with some custom modern devices. As said by Ju (2010), this flow depends largely on local media market size, ownership of media entities, the level of industrial development within that area, and the cultural preferences of local media consumers. As been said by the SBS participant,

"Actually, the Korean drama shows the sophisticated, the well-made and the modern trend that reflects the entire society. But the Korean traditional drama, though it's conservative but it has some power of storytelling. So it works. So, we see great potential and it doesn't conflict with the market share with the Americans or western dramas. The capabilities of actors and also to present the audio or whatever involve in a drama that is the strength" (Participant 3).

Douglas and Craig (1983); Cooper and Kleinschmidt (1985); Kirpalani and MacIntosh (1980) described product adaptation, promotion adaptation, channel development and competitive pricing strategies as the means by which firm's efficiently responds to the characteristic of foreign markets (Gomez and Valenzuela, 2005). In addition, the support of the government and the desire to compete in a globalized world also plays an important role. Therefore, the participant said,

"Contents industries are big so the government try to enhance our content to be in the world. We seat in a positive way because constantly the government and industry they look forward for challenge and competition and to make our vast experience in unique way to appeal to the market. So I see positively the excellence of Korean drama. Also now it is a globalisation as the world now becomes one it is very natural we go like work together and collaborate together to fulfil certain areas like in a specific countries or the place so then we have to share together and that will be the trend and also wave" (Participant 3).

Currently, it is considered a mainstream recreational activity for young urbanites to watch online foreign TV dramas online since they are highly equipped with cultural

and technological know-how. Moreover, Internet continuous streaming of TV programs is available 24-hours uninterrupted at affordable costs (Nelson, 1997). These online practices can be regarded as a new niche market for foreign TV dramas which should be given special attention. Factors such as digital technology, supply and demand, and the audiences' highly developed awareness of foreign cultures produces a mix that facilitated the influx of these foreign dramas and their popularity (Nakano, 2002; Jiang and Leung, 2012)

Moreover, Korea's advantage also results from its advanced internet access, enabling its media contents to spread worldwide, reaching out to particularly young, technologically-savvy consumers. The borderless cyberspace has seen many previously unknown Korean TV broadcasts transcending borders and larger international audiences (Ju, 2010).

"Very much market oriented production and talking about strategy we have to focus on profitable production. So one thing is about we cannot just make a TV, the world now TV is now is much very limited and they go for more variety of platforms TVs, mobile and so many. In the past, they go for TVs but now they go for web or different type of platform" (Participant 2).

All four participants agree that they try to make much use of internet based to expand their marketing efficiency and effectiveness to promote main their popularity.

"Everywhere in the world they know the Gangnam Style.
It's because of our strategy to market through social

networks service. Especially young people in your country, they have some fever for the Korean drama. They approach Korean products through online, Facebook or you know other social networks service. It is easy to share, is to post and here, the Korean entertainment business, when they release the programme, their marketing strategy is to approach individual through social network and they're sharing the information. This is very important to marketing strategy" (Participant 3).

The serious economic depression that hit Asia made it difficult for buyers to pay for foreign TV programs as they were constrained by funds. This meant that Korean media corporations' exports and its intra-regional marketing efforts were timely in meeting the demands of Asian media buyers. Added to this was the fact that Asian buyers were partial to Korean television programs which were also relatively inexpensive and attractive to their audiences (Ju, 2010).

There is no doubt that the popularity of Korean dramas is simultaneous with the advancement of internet technology and that allows for better spreading of Korean dramas throughout the world in a faster way. Furthermore, the audience had the opportunity to communicate straight with the actor and continuously get any information that is related to their favourite drama more easily.

5.6 Pragmatic Validity

To better understand the data obtained from the Korean's participants, a deep discussion was conducted with four people who are experienced and knowledgeable in Malaysian creative industries. They are composed of two Malaysian drama's

production (Malaysian participant 5 and 6), a Media Prima Brand Management Officer (Malaysian participant 8) and a Senior Associate Compliance & Presentation Astro, (Malaysian participant 7). In the discussion, the data obtained from Korea revalued and viewed from the standpoint of Malaysian. To be fair this discussion below will only have touched on the data or information that can be evaluated by Malaysian creative industry. The results of these discussions are as follow:

Research Question 1 – Culture and Audiences

5.6.1 Culture

Culture plays an important role in popularizing Korean drama. Korean dramas are different from other foreign dramas such as Thailand, India or Arab. Korean drama has its striking strength to place their culture in this country. As Changsu Pak (2010) has mentioned before that the Korean television dramas reflect Asian beliefs, way of life and value system, some of which are based on the teachings of Confucius, such as family ties, love or romance, respect for elders, loyalty, sibling love and emphasis on education. Looking at the participant 1(Korean participant) discussion above, he emphasized that Korean drama focusing on Asian values such as family that are not found in the western drama. This convincing statement has been supported by Malaysian participant 5:

–Korean dramas storyline is mostly similar to our life story in terms of cultural which meant the culture of the way of acting and thinking. In the context of respect, Korean drama has shown a same family value...just like us where they still have respect to elders and they respect their family. If you look in terms of their actions when meeting with parents... the manners are not much

different than us. So we feel easy as there is still an east civility in Korean dramas. In terms of romance is very subjective, but the way they expressed the feeling and taste are very much similar to our culture”.

The above statement has also getting an attention and approval from the other two Malaysian participants.

—We are Asian people and we actually have our own value in what we call Asian cultural which could drive us to get closer. We are actually different to Western where they can freely do...as for example kissing in front of others, sexual freedom and so on...and that is not a culture of Asians. They still have a scene where they show their love but still constrained by politeness. So this is one of the main reason Korean dramas being acceptance here” (Malaysian Participant 6).

Towards that extent the Malaysian participant 7 added:

—Korean drama inserted several of values that you can share as a family. They do have a romance scene but it's not that kind of intimate. Because we are polite, there are actually some scenes which are not suitable to watch by our audience and in that case the Astro will responsible to do some editing on it. So the Malaysian viewers will not see it all. The Astro also do the part of censorship on certain criteria such as sex, violent, culture and religious”.

According to Kim (2010), the modesty of Asia was instrumental in initially creating the success of Korean TV dramas in China, and enabled them to spread to other Asian markets, particularly in Islamic nations such as Iran and Indonesia. These

statements are referring as ‘emptiness’ in Malaysian audiences by Korean participant above. Is it true that the culture in Korean dramas may well fill Malaysian dramas emptiness. To explain in more depth, this statement is also touched by Malaysian participant six who described that:

“There are a lot of drama and culture but it is still a western culture, for instance in terms of thought... we are still imitating and not rooted in our own culture. Actually in our drama we still have strength... we do have a traditional storyline with respect on our culture but unfortunately we are very easy to absorb other people's cultures. For example, we absorb the Indian culture, western culture and we could see that Malaysian is so easy to absorb others. I do not say we are ‘empty’ but the factor is easily absorbed and there is no strength to our own culture”.

However, despite the fact that the culture enjoyment, there is another element that been highlighted by Korean dramas which rare in western dramas particularly teaching audiences to think.

“But another thing we can see in Korean dramas is they teaching us nothing are impossible for you if you really want to achieve something in life. We can do anything and even the dramas also teaching people how to be creative”
(Malaysian Participant 7).

It was evident when Changsu Pak (2010) also discussed the matters. He said that for example, as shown in the Korean drama ‘Dae Jang Geum’ (Jewel in the Palace), a heartwarming story of an orphaned cook who excelled into becoming the first

woman doctor of the king in the royal court of the 16th century Korea. This drama has a lot of family values, derived from Confucianism and the real East Asia sentiment of life.

5.6.2 Audiences

Psychologically Malaysian audiences are influenced by Korean drama. Indeed, this drama interest has to do with audience ages where Korean dramas focus on adolescents and adults. The adult will watch this drama and also the time of broadcast also very important. As Guan (2012) in describing the preferences of audience stated that, women are more sensitive to Korean TV drama as compared to male audiences. He suggested that this is most probably as women are usually sensitive to emotional behaviour. However, according to the Malaysia participant there are several factors that affect the female audience.

—In Malaysia there are still many housewives that stay at home. On average they are watching TV as their home entertainment. These groups are easy influence with a program that touches the emotions. And Korean dramas are most targeting women audiences. Therefore, the dramas mostly related to emotion and affection, family relationships, love, hate and jealousy. These are women favourite watch. So when this content mixed well, it is easily made them stay glued in front of TV” (Malaysian Participant 6).

However, other participant viewed that the creativity of Korean drama is also compelling that touched the Malaysian audience interest.

–Creativity is what I saw, how they project the idea friendly. This shows their concern towards their targeted audience enjoyment, so this is more for the audience fun and happiness. Even though our culture is more or less the same but still one must look carefully on audience want and need I mean they must go together” (Malaysian Participant 7).

There is a sense of how Korean exaggerates the narrative element which assisted with the music. Korea story has many elements of music to represent the feel and emotion towards either the actor or the mood they create. As Riley and Van Doren, (1992); Riley et al., (1998) mentioned, the storylines and emotional association as well as a fondness for the film locations have made audiences able to relate themselves with the characters. As this happens, audiences began experiencing familiar feelings with the characters and immerse themselves in the story, albeit vicariously, reacting to the actors as though they existed in their own lives (Kim & Hwang, 2012). Adding to that, Latiffah et. al., (2009), also noted that specifically, the themes, plots, storyline, quality of acting and production made these dramas appealing to foreign audiences.

On the other hand, related to the above statements, the participants believe that the costumes used in the drama productions also play an important part as to assume the role effectively.

–For example, in the traditional story when it's a portrait of a beautiful woman through the way they dress, the way she walks, and everything is show in very detail way. I

think it is the indirectly element in the fabrication method of Korean drama itself”.

Participant also added that:

–The Korean had their own story telling technique in Korean performing art and its form is in the form of singing with assists by drums or music. They emphasized the emotional elements in performing arts. So first they emphasize the emotion to the audience as they very good in that method. Secondly, they could see the type of storyline and how to attract the audiences. Thirdly is the idea of story in legend drama that could related to a popular love story” (Malaysian Participant 5).

–Normally before the drama go in our channel, Astro will ask for screener first. This is to check whether it is suitable for our audience and culture. Then Astro will decide the needs of censorship, replacement with other drama or just let it be their way. So the communication continues” (Malaysian Participant 7).

5.6.3 Collaboration

From the point of collaboration, participants acknowledge that there is cooperation in terms of promotion. There are many discussions that take place in Malaysia such as introducing Korean dramatis to Malaysian audiences and road tour across Malaysia.

–Astro will charge them for those works but in minimal only. Any program that wants to get in here and suitable for our audience and culture we accept. We don’t have some kind of joint venture because basically they pay us on every work we do for them” (Malaysian Participant 7).

Korean productions also do a lot of promotion and marketing here. Not just dramas but also other entertainment programs and even TV shopping program to promote their products and social media are one of the entertainment platforms.

—The Korean producer not only comes for event promotion here but also they do some shooting in Malaysia to make them closer to Malaysian audiences. Astro will run promotion and do content checking” (Malaysian Participant 7).

5.7 Strategy

In terms of strategy, the Malaysian participants viewed that the Korean marketing strategies of exporting the Korean production to Malaysia is more of an effort to fully utilized the relationship of Asian broadcasting as well as the potential of Malaysian diversity culture.

—The reason they are selling the product outside is because inside in Korea market itself they have a lot of competitors. In Malaysia, they have a market here. So instead of selling in their own country may be the margin is small they go outside which is for example Malaysia we have a huge Korean based that’s why the product marketable here. Also the TV stations now they have purchasing more Korean title compare from Thailand and other. Even a hip TV which Malaysian pay web TV, they have a specific channel for Korean content”.

He added,

–The Korean government actually purposely brings their market to global. I read somewhere ...it is actually the Korean initiative. I agree that the Korean program is a complete packaging” (Malaysian Participant 8).

5.8 Gain and Maintaining

Although the Korean drama does not have any specific strategy as mentioned in page 242, they do have the initiatives to exploit the social media to popularize their dramas. In doing so, the Malaysian participants believe that is how the Korean dramas able to gain and maintain their popularity.

–Social network is intriguing us to continue engage with the Korean drama and I think that is their strategy. We can easily engage with Korean dramas as it is easy to access and watch. Just imagine at current scenario where we can watch Korean drama just the next day of the show in Korean. My example is Asian TV, the drama can be viewed within the next day of Korean TV show. It is kind of promotion for them so it is free. Korean dramas are not to be seen for only a day and then we get exhausted but their story causes us to watch repeatedly and not lose” (Malaysian Participant 5)

5.9 Summary

In sum, it could be demonstrated as shown in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1

Korean and Malaysia participants view related on research question

RQ1 How do Korean drama attract the Malaysian audiences?	
<p>"Korean drama actually is kind of family oriented drama. So,.. not all dramas are focusing on dramas but many of them are focusing on such family value, Asian value. I think such values are the ones that every viewer in Asian countries including Malaysia are having in common. So, I think family values can also appeal to viewers to Malaysian viewers as well and then, I think that the quality of dramas are great.. and then,.. I think we do not have much violence in our drama... and then,... family value, small love, small violence, high quality of productions and such elements can be...Korean try to produce a drama that something touch the Asian hearts, something really close. Things in common. So, those values can be,.. can also be shared with viewers in Malaysia as well." (Participant 1)</p>	<p>–Korean dramas storyline is mostly similar to our life story in terms of cultural which meant the culture of the way of acting and thinking. In the context of respect, Korean drama has shown a same family value...just like us where they still have respect to elders and they respect their family. If you look in terms of their actions when meeting with parents... the manners are not much different than us. So we feel easy as there is still an east civility in Korean dramas. In terms of romance is very subjective, but the way they expressed the feeling and taste are very much similar to our culture”.</p> <p>Malaysian participant 5</p>
<p>Based on both participants above, viewers prefer to watch a drama which situations related to their daily life. In real life, what is important is the factor of love, family, life, harmony and happiness.</p>	

Table 5.1 (Continue)

RQ2 What are the strategies adopted by Korean media broadcasters in promoting Korean television drama?

"Firstly, Korean dramas are shown in South Korea and then, two or three weeks after such contents will be on KBS World because we have to put subtitling in English and it takes time. So, production team is main objective is to target Korean viewers first and then, the programming team on KBS World select which drama contents will be best suited for overseas viewers" **(Participant 2).**



—The reason they are selling the product outside is because inside in Korea market itself they have a lot of competitors. In Malaysia, they have a market here. So instead of selling in their own country may be the margin is small they go outside which is for example Malaysia we have a huge Korean based that's why the product marketable here. Also the TV stations now they have purchasing more Korean title compare from Thailand and other. Even a hip TV which Malaysian pay web TV, they have a specific channel for Korean content. The Korean government actually purposely brings their market to global. I read somewhere ...it is actually the Korean initiative. I agree that the Korean program is a complete packaging" **(Malaysian Participant 8).**

As stated by both participants above, Korean drama focuses on Asian sentiment as they believe that culture could touch the audience heart and therefore it is the strength in drama production. They are not too dependent on the media strategy for the real strategy is the lesson that has been taken from their past life and experience. Strength and passion is born of awareness and enthusiasm for succeed. Experienced has taught them to keep trying to improve which indirectly, the main driver to continue to succeed is their spirit and thus is considered a very effective strategy.

Table 5.1 (Continue)

RQ3 What are the Korean media strategies to gain and maintain the popularity of Korean television dramas in Malaysia?

"There are no more revenues making from local so we go for overseas market. But if we go overseas we cannot simply put our things. We need to know what the audience like, when they promoting, not just Korean star singing, we have to maybe employ the local producers to arrange the K-pop being observed by the local audience and we have to carefully decide how they like to enjoy their Korean content publically. In order to make our business a success, we may have to carefully design our marketing..."

(Participant 2).

–Social network is intriguing us to continue engage with the Korean drama and I think that is their strategy. We can easily engage with Korean dramas as it is easy to access and watch. Just imagine at current scenario where we can watch Korean drama just the next day of the show in Korean. My example is Asian TV, the drama can be viewed within the next day of Korean TV show. It is kind of promotion for them so it is free. Korean dramas are not to be seen for only a day and then we get exhausted but their story causes us to watch repeatedly and not lose"

(Malaysian Participant 5).

As mentioned by both participants above, to gain and maintain the popularity, it is important and advisable in any business field to have knowledge in terms of customer needs and the demand of global. In this case, the Korean production does not take for granted because every investment is expected a satisfactory return. The best production is to follow the customer trend, needs and requirements as well as the competitive pricing strategies. In addition, global business undoubtedly demands more attention and planning. Each factor from the point of religion, race, nation and culture must be taken into account in detail

In short it could be explained the success of Korean drama can be divided into three main elements. These three elements (as shown above) are the key factors to look for success. Every issue that requires attention must be guided by the tastes of the audience. Based on the finding, viewers prefer to watch a drama which situations related to their daily life. In real life, what is important is the factor of love, family, life, harmony and happiness. Looking at the diagram below shows the Korean dramas are using the issue to draw the attention of the audiences. They understand the need as human beings in life is something unique.

As figure 5.4 shown below is a diagram that shows a summary of the finding obtained.

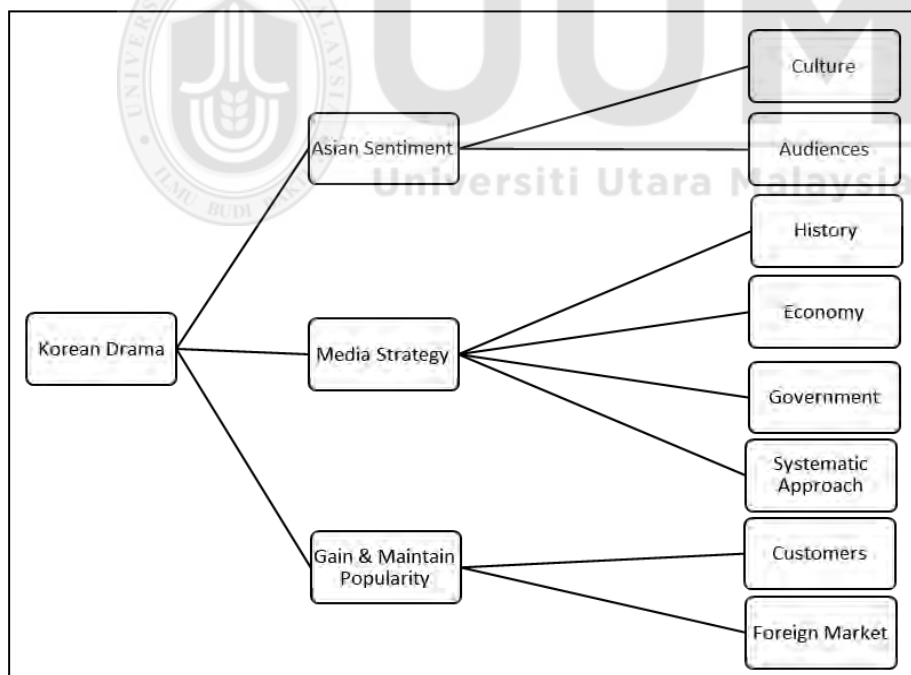


Figure 5.4 The findings outcome

Korean drama focuses on Asian sentiment as they believe that culture could touch the audience heart and therefore it is the strength in drama production. They are not

too dependent on the media strategy for the real strategy is the lesson that has been taken from their past life and experience. Strength and passion is born of awareness and enthusiasm for succeed. Experienced has taught them to keep trying to improve which indirectly, the main driver to continue to succeed is their spirit and thus is considered a very effective strategy.

However, to gain and maintain the popularity, it is important and advisable in any business field to have knowledge in terms of customer needs and the demand of global. In this case, the Korean production does not take for granted because every investment is expected a satisfactory return. The best production is to follow the customer trend, needs and requirements as well as the competitive pricing strategies. In addition, global business undoubtedly demands more attention and planning. Each factor from the point of religion, race, nation and culture must be taken into account in detail.

In sum, the Korean broadcasting media are not really tied to a strategy that could be described as an extraordinary though the experiences that make them what they are now. Their historical background experience of hardship to survive, economically poor country, and challenges from other developed countries has made them to compete and creatively working on how to improve their lives. The missing of human sentiments and Asianess elements in most of the foreign production dramas has also taught the Korean dramas to fill in the vacuum. As such, the Korea dramas easily attracted to foreign countries like Malaysia. Apart from that, the Korean broadcasting media is also making advantage of communication technology to

spread and market their dramas through internet, creating websites as well as promoting through television satellite.



CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.0 Discussion

This chapter will provide the discussion on overall study summary. The study analysis will be arranged according to four (4) categories that are practical implication, theoretical implication, limitation and future direction.

This study examines various aspects of Korean media strategies that focus on Korean television drama in Malaysia. The confusion of the success of Korea drama in Malaysia was presented and discussed in details and easy to recognize. With some carefully descriptions of this study eventually dismantle the strategy of Korea drama in Malaysia and also the reasons of its successes.

The popularity of Korean television dramas has been blooming across North and Southeast Asia, especially in Japan, China, Mongolia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and Thailand. Yet, in Malaysia, there has been no studies conducted the media strategies used in marketing and promoting the dramas in the country. The lack of local research as well as other global issues related to Korean drama presents the most significant gap in this area of study.

The study sought to answer three questions: First, the reasons behind Korean dramas' ability to attract Malaysian audiences. Secondly, the strategies employed by the Korean media broadcasting in promoting the television dramas and thirdly, the strategies used to ensure that these dramas gain popularity and may be maintained in future in Malaysia. This study explores the reasons behind Korean drama's attraction

to Malaysian audiences, looks at the strategies employed by Korean media broadcasters to promote these dramas, besides studying the media strategies to maintain their popularity in the country.

This study is timely as it will enable Malaysian media to plan and organise their productions to suit Asian tastes, so that these productions may also obtain interest and sales from other neighbourhood broadcasting networks. It will also aid the future plans of our local media houses and even the government's future direction for these media houses. Moreover, the findings are highly relevant for academics, particularly, for those in media and drama distribution studies.

The qualitative method (face-to-face semi-structured interviews) was employed in this study. It involved four Korean broadcasting practitioners who produce and promote television dramas and are regarded as professional who can share practical hindsight and experience.

In sum, it can be said that the thrust of the Korean drama's popularity lies in their focus on Asian cultures and values, and close simulation of Asian lifestyles and beliefs. While American dramas may also have family based storylines, it is believed that the Asian storylines resonate better with and are abler to touch on the daily aspects of the Asian audience's lives. Family values and culture play an important role towards the acceptance of audiences thus leading to their success.

Obviously, people would be interested to watch dramas that are more closely related to their own cultures even though they communicate with different languages and

have to rely on subtitles in order to understand the storyline. The rise of Korean dramas in Malaysia clearly shows that language has not become a barrier for Malaysians to watch Korean dramas, but rather its similarity to real people that touches dominantly on human sensitivity such as lifestyle, value and family that has propels Korean dramas success in Malaysia.

Korean programs satisfy Asian audiences' emotional needs by being easy to assimilate to a similar life style, cultural proximity and expressiveness. Korean dramas had been proven to successfully fill the 'emptiness' feeling that could not be filled by Western dramas. Korean dramas have been realistically able to associate its audiences' needs in terms of culture interests. As a result, all of these factors have contributed to a better chance of Korean dramas to be broadcasted in Malaysia. It also shows that the interest of audience is closely related to the culture of the country, the sensitivity of the country as well as the trend of age needs. The culture influences the audience even from the point of belief or ages. Understanding the needs of the audiences are a key element in the acceptance of Korean dramas production in Malaysia.

Apart from that, the hard upbringing and the past suffering that Koreans have experienced, the Korean believed that they need to come out and stand up for their own future. What they have gone through, and in particular, their devastating history, has opened their eyes and renewed their strength so that they are determined to stand up and fight for their people and to rebuild their beloved homeland. Due to the situation, Korean is inadvertently facing with an economy conflict. The conflict arises when everyone is looking and searching on how to make profit and expanding

their businesses to overseas market as their local market is deemed insufficient to sustain profits.

Having said that, the government also aggressively advanced the nation's entertainment sectors that showed much growth potential such as films, dramas, gaming and music (MCST 2009, KOCCA 2012). The government provided comprehensive for these sectors in terms of technological assistance, skilled workforce development, infrastructure development and export assistance programs.

Yet, surprisingly almost all the participants interviewed announced that they did work with a comprehensive promotion strategy. While they acknowledged the need for accurate strategies, they have actually used several varying approaches in promoting Korean dramas as they have had to adapt and respond to historical developments and self-realization.

The findings reveal how intricately linked the Korean media broadcasting strategies are with the grassroots such as history, economics, government support and systematic approach. Undoubtedly, lending their rich life experiences and historical background to the dramas made them hugely appealing, also leading to them being successfully promoted abroad.

Delivering products in response to customer needs is crucial in any business. Thus to ensure that they can retain the Malaysian audience's attention, Korean media broadcasting made it imperative to provide Malay or English language subtitles for every drama shown on Malaysia television. Customer is a major part in any

marketing and it is essential to review their needs and requirements from time to time. In fact, Korean productions have been willing to take a risk to implement their strategy. In order to be known in Malaysia, they have implemented a different approach whereby they initially paid Malaysian channel such as ASTRO to broadcast their program.

Therefore, to obtain and further sustain the popularity of Korean dramas in a foreign country, the understanding of Malaysian audiences is the main objective. With the knowledge that Korean drama is the most popular genre among other Korean programs, Korean broadcasting decided to increase more of the dramas in order to fulfil Malaysian's interests such as romantic and melodramas with some custom modern devices.

All four participants agreed that they try to make much use of internet based to expand their marketing efficiency and effectiveness to promote their popularity. There is no doubt that the popularity of Korean dramas is simultaneous with the advancement of internet technology and that allows for better spreading of Korean dramas throughout the world in a faster way. Furthermore, the audience had the opportunity to communicate straight with the actor and continuously get any information that is related to their favourite drama more easily.

6.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to Korean media literature in several ways. Firstly, the finding that it is worthy to foster and cultivate culture and Asian values through the media,

also complements a substantial body of research supporting the significance of Korean media strategy in shaping their productions for audiences in foreign markets. It is a unique and interesting to note that the Korean media able to develop strategies and approaches to get the audience's attention from foreign countries. The Korean media is using its strong culture, beliefs, values, and at the same time does not miss the reality of life such as love, family, sacrifice and loyalty in its drama productions. This concept distinguishes the Korean drama from other Western popular dramas as Korean drama captivated the audience by bringing the audience to remain realistic by focusing on human nature.

Korea has in fact, had many hidden factors behind the success of a media strategy including the history of their country (colonized), hardship to survive, economic pressure as well as experiencing limited resources. As such, the creative industries are seeming a good solution hence they do their best to rebuild their lives and their country. Through this concept we could see the influence of culture, human touch and the reality of life are the element that attracted the attention of the audience.

The theory of cultural proximity as explained by Straubhaar (2003), __the tendency to prefer media products from one's own culture or the most similar possible culture__". Cultural proximity defines how transnational media content from an neighborhood country or a country that is similar, exercises influence on audiences residing in that particular area (Ju, 2010). This concept is useful in explaining how foreign and domestic media can attract audiences from an international context. It was found that cultural factors such as dressing, nonverbal communication, humour, religion, music,

and narrative styles played a mediating role in audience preferences (Sinclair, 1996b).

In reviewing the strategy of the Korean media in television drama, it is clear that the one element that stands out of all the cultural proximity factors, is that of humanity or the human touch. This element has been previously described in literature regarding cultural proximity, as Asian sympathy. Hence, Kim (2004), concluded that in their preference for Korean programs, Asians showed empathy for Asian cultural frameworks such as family morals, high morality and love and sacrifice. He confirmed that Korean programs showed values that were easier to assimilate, and this meant that it made it easier to satisfy Asian emotional needs.

Understanding the needs of the audiences as a human being who has feelings and equality as human beings is the secret behind the theory of cultural proximity which do not expressly emphasized in the study of Korean drama media strategy before. This finding indicated that Korean drama has different approaches than western drama in terms of human touch. Korean drama seems to understand what is there been lacked in western drama and based on the study and understanding the needs of the audiences, they make an advantages of what is lacking to attract foreign audiences. In doing so, they also able to creatively presenting their cultures, values as well as beliefs in their drama productions.

As discussed earlier, to achieve the successes of Korean drama, there are many factors that contribute to the matters. Apart of strategic approaches, the success of the Korean drama strategy is also influenced by their historical background, economic

situation and government support. The uniqueness of their today success is begun through the tribulation of past life. In this finding, it shows that Korean went through several phases of life that eventually led to the realization of success in life.

The study also found that economic conditions and geography of Korea is another push factor for the Korean media's achievements. In other words, it is mobilizing forces to Korea to formulate goals and objectives to media success abroad. The most significant outcome of this study reveals that the serious hard work in creative industry and also the culture is truly has led to the success of the promotion campaign itself.

Like any other business, identifying targeted audience needs and desires is very important. As a country that had never been known before, the courage to take risks in business is a great step. This study assessed that what people do to be known by others. The Korean media realize that the western drama has long-established globally. However, persistence in taking risks and trying to impress the audience is something the Korean media bravely does. Doing a research and explore more market is crucial part for promotion preparation. The study also found that to be successful we need to expand the empire of businesses overseas. Even so, its own culture is not forgotten and always brought with pride. Identify market and current needs and always think ahead to develop themselves and the country.

Finally, all the findings, statements, and discussions as well as the theory mentioned is very much related and linked to the success of Korean dramas. Whether it is intentionally or unintentionally done by the Korean drama to achieve where they are now, it has clearly proven that it is a success. The combination and mixture of

beliefs, culture, media, creativity as well as human touch are the significant ingredients to the success of Korean drama. Evidently, the Korean drama has been globally marketed and popular in foreign countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, China, Middle East and even America.

6.2 Practical Implications

This study has several important and practical applications. Korea has developed into a success story in a short time and continuously making a progress. In particular, the Korean television drama has managed to be popular and break into an international market through various strategies.

According to Yeon (2008), the highly competitive pricing of Korean music, television dramas, and movies, was a key factor that attracted Asian production companies to buy Korean products. However, other scholars highlighted the role played by casting good-looking idols in Korean dramas to attract fans who idolise these actors and actresses. This was cited to emphasize that cheaper pricing may not be the key factor in ensuring the popularity of these dramas. Vu (2011) further concluded that one of the main factors contributing to the success of these dramas was cultural proximity. He observed that besides the emphasis on family, South Korean dramas were also popular because of the romantic love and highly emotive plots. Third, South Korea dramas is associated with modern consumerism and therefore, it serves as an effective marketing tool for these dramas. Finally, the success of South Korea dramas is based on concerted efforts involving politics and economics.

Consequently, the findings of the indicated various practical implications, as follows: First, the Korean approach to drama is markedly different from the West, Japanese or China in that, they do not include much violence. Their focus is on culture and human touch and this makes their dramas fresh and unique. Essentially, the dramas propagate family value, love, and depicts familiar and comfortable daily life scenes presented in an interesting manner, different from western drama. Thus, their dramas are real and authentic and does not try to imitate the dramas produced by more advanced countries. In sum, Korean drama issues are centred on building excitement around Asian cultural values to influence the audience interest.

Second, the Koreans have proved that language is not a barrier in promoting Korean dramas abroad. Although the Korean language is almost unknown in most countries compared to English, Japanese or Chinese language, Korea has demonstrated that their local dramas are unique and appeal to wider audiences. Infact, they are not easily intimidated by other foreign language productions and take pride in using their own language.

Next, historical suffering has made the nation and their people even stronger and more competitive. Due to their hardships in the past, they have learnt to survive, rise above all obstacles and protect their own country. History has taught them some tough lessons about continuing to work hard to rebuild the country so that they may rise out of hardship and poverty. They are intent on rebuilding their country and their people and to prove their ability to move forward alongside other developing countries.

Fourthly, the economy problems of the country have stimulated Koreans to turn to the creative industry. In fact, they have used the adverse economic situation in Korea in to open up other opportunities and realize their abilities in the creative industry. Hence, their seriousness in building their creative industries and ensuring that they are popular besides being strategically executed.

Finally, to gain and maintain the popularity of Korean dramas, the Korean broadcasters always believed that catering to the needs of the consumers has effectively increased sales. They learn to understand the audiences as well as the current foreign market. As such, their strategy involved the successful packaging of the national culture and commercialising these packages to foreign countries and thus enhancing the national brand and competitiveness in the global economy. Above all, they created a strategic cooperative and cultural partnership throughout the regional media industry.

6.3 Limitations

Korean drama media strategy is a study that focuses on the promotion and media strategies of Korean drama in Malaysia. Of course in a short period of time for the study had limited capability. The time limits are only allowed to look deeply into the study of angles promotion and media strategy alone. This study used qualitative methods in which in-depth interviews conducted with four (4) individuals. They were selected based on their professional operations of the promotion and media strategies of Korean television broadcasters.

Firstly, this study explores how Korean drama attracts Malaysian audiences whilst investigating the Korean media's initiatives in promoting Korean drama as well as its strategies to maintain the Korean drama popularity in Malaysia. This is to provide a clear understanding on media strategy undertaken by selected Korean television stations. Those two television stations chosen are Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), representing government television station while Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) as a private television station.

Secondly, due to the time constraint, this study was conducted in an environment of Korean broadcasters (chosen) focusing on Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) and Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) only and is not extended to the Korean government, the government of Malaysia or any Malaysian television stations, or on any drama storyline or anything related to the drama's narrative. This limitation is very crucial due to the fact that in order to understand the actual promotion and media strategy done within the two stations effectively.

6.4 Future Direction

This study offers several directions for future research. First, additional research using a new instrument such as focus groups should be carried out as the present strategy focused on individual interviews to discover the promotion and strategies of Korean media broadcasting to provide information on acceptance of Korean drama in Malaysia as it related to Korean media strategy. Using a new instrument will replicate the findings of this study and thus address the generalizability of the findings reported in this study. This would help to further explain the popularity of

Korean dramas in Malaysia as opinions will be obtained from audiences of different ethnic groups.

More research is also needed as there are many other parts in the initial explanatory model that could be refined and extended. The interview data obtained is extremely rich with information and the current study managed to uncover only a fraction of the information that is relevant. Future research can analyse the interviews conducted here to distil information about the other aspects of the Korean media broadcasting strategy in Asia. These additional analyses could then respectively inform the development of future survey studies as described above.

To explore more and make this study more comprehensive, it is recommended to include the government works as a supporter to drama popularity across Asia. A detailed study on Korean government supported towards development of the creative industries and make it part of development and national income. This study also required in-depth interview as it require a central phenomenon of knowledge and ideas.

In summary, the Korean drama culture has succesfully caught the imagination of audiences by blending enticing modernized Western images with a just sufficient dose of Asian sentimentality. This combination is at the base of the Korean Wave. This study was successful dismantling Korean media strategy behind the popularity of their drama. By understanding the Korean broadcasting media strategy, we could look more closely at the role played by them in order to ensure their creative output is viewed by not only local but also managed to attract Malaysian viewers. Looking

at the history of Korean life that had oppressed and colonized and geographical factors which limiting them to farm, making it a motivation and drive to succeed in creative industry. This can provide awareness to other countries, especially Malaysia and such insights will clarify the necessary actions that the media practitioners should take in formulating their own media strategy to escalate their success as successful as the Korean drama industry. The study also will fill the gap in Malaysian media to plan and organize Malaysian drama to the Asian taste to attract other neighbourhood broadcasting networks.



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TRANSCRIPT SAMPLE FROM PARTICIPANT 1

Dong: Malaysia is ASTRO.

Julina: Your part in Malaysia is as a?

Dong: ASTRO.

Julina: Yes, under ASTRO.

Dong: KBS World is actually available by ASTRO to around 3.5 million subscribers. Have you ever watched KBS World?

Julina: Yeah, that's why I feel something unique because compared with Indonesia, with Bollywood, Japanese, Taiwan and everything, ASTRO never hired a special channel for this film or drama from other countries but from Korea, they have two channels special for Korea drama and all programme. That's why I think it must be something unique happened in Korea that makes Malaysia confident that there is a viewer that want to watch Korea.

Dong: You mean there are two Korean channel, I mean Sony One. Sony, One? One channel?

Julina: One, yeah TV One isn't it? Channel One and then channel, (KBS?) I don't know about that channel. Oh three channel, sorry, three channel.

Dong: Three channels? Have you heard about the OK?

Julina: Ahh. They going to have another channel OK but umm around this February.

Dong: Channel M you mean?

Julina: Channel M? Umm.

Dong: No?

Julina: No no. So since you are dealing with ASTRO, I like to maybe this the suitable question for you because umm what makes Korean, I mean KBS have a confident or strong confident that you have a viewer in Malaysia? How you come to think that Malaysia is the place, is the best place to put all your productions?

Dong: Ahh. When it comes to production, I'm not quite familiar with it but my current view is that all the Korean dramas and varieties are very popular not only in Malaysia but also in other Asian countries as well and there are you know, there are many young actors called Idols. So, they like, Malaysian viewers do like such young actors showed in dramas. Also, they like to enjoy some variety shows such as 'Two Nights and One Day'. Have you seen it?

Julina: No. (Have seen it before).

Dong: And 'The Return of Superman'. I think such variety programmes are popular, not only in Malaysia but also in other Asian countries. We do not particularly focus on Malaysia only. Because we do have one signal you know from South Korea. We send one signal to many countries, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore.

Julina: You mean only in Asia countries or?

Dong: No. We try global but we send another signal to Japan, we send another signal to America but the rest of the world, we do have one we call 'Feed, One Feed'. So, definitely for Malaysia only we do not particularly focus on Malaysia, all the same.

Julina: How do you know that your programme KBS or Korean Programme so popular. How do you know that?

Dong: From time to time, I visited my partners in Asian countries. A couple of years ago, I went to Malaysia, to visit ASTRO and then, they did let me know that, according to them, they have also their own data on which programmes are popular from KBS World. According to them, they let me know that drama contents is very popular and the next one is variety shows and then they do not like news programme because they the news programme doesn't have any subtitle also they do not understand. The most popular programmes is drama. It is the same with other operators in other countries such as Hong Kong and Singapore as well. Most popular programmes are dramas. Next one is variety.

Julina: So you make a research before you send in your programme to Malaysia? Because you said you're going to ASTRO and ask them. So, you make some research and make some homework before?

Dong: Hmmm. We do not, ahh I do not do any research but time to time I go to Foreign countries I mean Malaysia or Singapore and listen from my partners.

Julina: Ohh. You have a talk with them and discussion with them.

Dong: So I ask them which programmes are popular. If they said drama, then we'll put more dramas on our channel. So currently, dramas take up around 50% of our entire programming.

Julina: Yeah. Dramas are more popular.

Dong: And then we put variety shows.

Julina: Like Runningman and then there are lots of programmes that we watched. Yeah, I also agree that me and my family also love to watch drama.

Dong: But you know, it depends, it depends on ages. If they are over 30 years old, then they probably love watching dramas but below 30 or 20 or in their (teenager) more than 10 years old, from 10 to 20 years old then they do like watching variety shows.

Julina: Also likes music like my son.

Dong: Although Runningman is not KBS programme.

Julina: Oh, not KBS programme?

Dong: No, SBS.

Julina: I see.

Dong: It is on the air on the Sony One channel but Runningman from what I heard from partner in ASTRO, they said that Runningman is the best programme. Very very popular.

Julina: Very popular, in fact our Malaysian is looking forward for the programme to they said they are going to shooting in Malaysia. So, everybody looking

forward for the time. So, and I also know that the, I can see that KBS has been very aggressively promoting their drama to the Malaysia. Can you explain me why everybody try to put a lot of dramas in for Malaysian viewers?

Dong: You mean adding more dramas on our channel?

Julina: Yes. Why you aggressively try to put a lot of drama because it is not only ASTRO, we also have other channel, also every but not every afternoon but almost every afternoon or every evening, we have Korean dramas. So it shows that very aggressive KBS sending the new dramas. So, why they sending such things?

Dong: Because we, in our position, we have to appeal to Malaysian viewers and then, they do love to watch drama content. That's why we need to put more dramas on our.

Julina: Is there because of more popular or because of the marketing? I mean Malaysia love to buy more dramas or compare with other countries?

Dong: You know, there is two businesses in Korea. In our department we are responsible for distributing 24/7 linear channel. On their linear channel we do have a more than 50% of dramas and then, we have another company called 'KBS Media' where individual content.

Julina: Oh. KBS World and KBS Media is different?

Dong: KBS Media is a subsidiary company.

Julina: Oh. I see.

Dong: 'Mother' company (KBS World), 'Sister' company (KBS Media) okay?

Julina: Alright.

Dong: They are selling individual content.

Julina: So KBS Media is about selling the thing?

Dong: Selling the individual drama. But me, I'm in charge of the 24/7 channel. You know what I mean?

Julina: I see.

Dong: So, if I compare to other countries, we do sell lots of contents including dramas and varieties to Hong Kong and Taiwan and Japan. These three countries are the largest countries where we sell our individual contents. Malaysia, when it comes to Malaysia, they do not buy so much individual contents. But when it comes to linear channel, it is all the same as I told you before we only have one feed.

Julina: Umm. Do you know because you said you keep sending the drama to Malaysia and Korea and uh Korean drama to Malaysia and Singapore and Hong Kong. Do you know why Malaysia because we are a Muslim country, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia and other countries. Why are we accepting Korean drama?

Dong: Korean drama is actually is kind of family oriented drama. So, not all dramas are focusing on dramas but many of them are focusing on such family value, Asian value. I think such values are the ones that every viewers in Asian countries including Malaysia are having in common. So, I think family values

can also appeal to viewers to Malaysian viewers as well and then, I think that the quality of dramas are great and then, I think we do not have much violence in our drama and then, family value, small love, small violence, high quality of productions and such elements can be...

Julina: I mean you are saying that you try to, Korean try to produce a drama that something touch the Asian hearts, something really close.

Dong: Yes, yes. Things in common. So, those values can be, can also be shared with viewers in Malaysia as well.

Julina: Umm. Just asking, are you, are Korean now are trying to, I don't know the words but I'll say are trying to selling the culture to other countries? I mean to introduce the culture to other countries or something like that. Are they trying to do that?

Dong: Yes of course. One of our main objective of our channel is to enhance, increase the value of Korean, I mean expand culture including food, clothing, fashion, travel and I think that is also a, our objective by distributing our channel to such countries.

Julina: May I know why you do that? Why Korean do that?

Dong: Why Korean do that?

Julina: Yes. Is it because of money or because you think that entertainment programme is the only can increase income to the economy? Generate income to the economy?

Dong: Currently, we can divide into two, there is places where Korean Wave is strong and there is countries that Korean Wave is not that strong. Right? In Asia, I think Korean Wave is very strong compare to the western countries especially Europe, Middle-East and Africa, the Korean Wave is not that strong. But for the countries where the Korean Wave is strong, we are focusing on getting more income from those countries but for the countries that Korean Wave is not that strong, at this stage, we are trying to expand our coverage in those countries.

Julina: Expand the coverage? You mean including drama and other programmes?

Dong: No no no. Putting our channel in the country and then, they will become familiar with our channel as time passes by. Then, we would like to ask them to pay for a such license fee for getting our channel but at this stage, countries at Europe they do not pay any license fee at the moment, instead, we are expanding our channel in such countries but for the countries where Korean Wave is very strong, then, we would like to get revenue from such countries.

Julina: Are they any license from your country to have a channel in Malaysia? Example, ASTRO. Do they need to ask like a license from Korean before put the programme in our country?

Dong: You know, KBS and ASTRO has to have a contract/agreement between KBS and ASTRO and then, if they would like to broadcasts KBS World on their platform/satellite, we call it DTH and ASTRO has ASTRO On The GO and they do have Hypp TV platform as well and then if they want to broadcasts KBS World on their platforms they do have to have a license from us. Then, but I can't tell you the terms and details conditions.

Julina: It's okay.

Dong: They do need to have a license.

Julina: Are they contract with you for a certain years?

Dong: (Nodded in agreement) And then we renew and renew.

Julina: So, what is your planning to make sure that they keep renewing with your programme?

Dong: Actually, every year we are producing drama contents/variety contents and then, for renewal, we need to produce much better contents than last year to renew.

Julina: Oh. Do you do something like doing a research, asking the ASTRO, what do you want for the next two years? What do you like? Do you ask them something like that?

Dong: Yes yes. Whenever I visited ASTRO, I would like to hear their thoughts on our programming and then, they provide some suggestions. They compare Runningman, they told me that KBS performance is not that good comparing to SBS. Runningman is produced by SBS and it is distributed by Sony One channel. "You need to put more efforts on producing such programme". Then, I accept their opinions and I will deliver such suggestions to the production teams and then, they also want some on-site promotion events, marketing events. They actually want Korean Actors to be in ASTRO and meet their fans in Malaysia. They also want promotions. Then, I will deliver such suggestions to our production team as well. But, it depends on budget and scheduling with such actors.

Julina: Are you trying to say that you are KBS and SBS are compete with each other?

Dong: (Nodded in agreement) But KBS is a public broadcasters, whereas SBS is a private company.

Julina: Yea. So you are supported by government isn't it? KBS is..

Dong: Not actually, we are funded by two main, I mean three main elements. The first one is a subscription fee from Korean viewers. The second one is advertising and the third one is our another income. So, our budget consists of this three elements by what I just talked to you.

Julina: Okay. That means this three elements is nothing to do with the government? No? The government is not helping?

Dong: When our company was established very long time ago, the government funded. But nowadays, our budget comes from the three elements; advertising, subscription fee from viewers and other incomes, selling individual contents, distributing 24/7 channels to overseas and then, we are getting revenues and then, that is the another income. Three elements.

Julina: So you are no longer have a government funding?

Dong: We do have some small government funding for our...

Julina: Salary? How about salary?

Dong: No, no. In KBS there is KBS World Radio and another radio station targeting the North Korea and northern part of China where Koreans are living and

then, for such broadcast, radio broadcast, the government provide the some/such activities. In general, we are not funded by the government.

Julina: Oh. Alright, okay. Umm. I asking whether how do you see the future of Korean drama especially in Malaysia? The future.

Dong: I think that is a very difficult question for me to reply. I'm not quite sure because we are targeting not only Malaysia but also other Asian countries.

Julina: Do you think one day people will get bored with this kind of same thing you are telling or do you think your Korean drama will get much more bigger?

Dong: I think there is a chance that Malaysian viewers are getting bored with Korean dramas we produced. Similar dramas and they got bored, then our productions drama team do not focus entirely on Malaysia you know. KBS World, the dramas on KBS World are from KBS TV1 and KBS TV2 which means drama contents is basically for Korean viewers, okay. KBS dramas at first for the Korean viewers. Such dramas can be on KBS World after two or three weeks. Firstly, Korean dramas are shown in South Korea and then, two or three weeks after such contents will be on KBS World because we have to put subtitling in English and it takes time. So, production team is main objective is to target Korean viewers first and then, the programming team on KBS World select which drama contents will be best suited for overseas viewers. So, I think this one will be good for Malaysian viewers or Singapore viewers or Hong Kong viewers, they select it and they put them on KBS World which is an international channel. That means our production teams actually has no concerns on foreign markets, their primary concerns is to

attract more Korean viewers in South Korea first and then, our programming team select it.

Julina: Are you saying that is there any show to the Korean viewers first and then, see whether it is good or not and then, only can bring it to other world?

Dong: You know, we have many historic dramas, Korean Historic dramas but in South Korea such history dramas are very popular but if you put such historic drama on KBS World our viewership in foreign countries will be very low because they do not understand Korean history, they are not familiar with them, the costumes. That's why we not put such much history programmes on KBS World. Most of Asian viewers do like such romantic, comedy dramas.

Julina: You mean that this people who select to bring this to overseas, they have to do something, they have to know all about the country first before sending their drama. Is that something like that? They have to know, they have to familiarize with the country before they sending the drama isn't it?

Dong: (Nodded in agreement) Yes, they are well aware of the needs or demands from Asian viewers.

Julina: So, do you think KBS have a method or strategy to promote Korean Wave? I mean all together the Korean Wave.

Dong: I'm not quite sure whether this is a strategy or plans but we are trying to have some on-site activity. You know, we bring I mean we take such singers and actors to overseas market. We held a Music Bank Show in Malaysia a couple of years ago. This year we do have a plan to hold a Music Bank Show in Vietnam. Annually, we do have such promotional activities in foreign

countries. Also, we have a programme called 'A Song For You' or 'A Style For You' and then, in the show there will be some Idols, Idol Actors and then we take them to overseas countries to do have some promotions to meet local viewers, local fans in partnership with, you know, our partners. So, we are trying to add more on-site promotions or marketing activities.

Julina: So that is one part of your method or strategies to get closer to your international viewer and then, I also noticed that Korean also have a something like Grammy Awards for the actor and actress in Korea but they have held in Singapore, in other countries, not in Korea. Why? Because I saw it early this year, they held it maybe in Singapore or somewhere.

Dong: MIA? MIA? (MIA Awards) MAMA?

Julina: I don't know but there is a Grammy Awards.

Dong: MAMA?

Julina: Yeah and then, not in Korea but in other country. Why they do that? Do you know why they do that? Is it part of your strategy to get closer to viewer or?

Dong: You know, MAMA, MAMA event is, is not run by KBS, run by I think CJ E&M.

Julina: Oh, that's different?

Dong: Different channel. CJ E&M is a private company. They do have a channel 'M'. They distribute the channel 'M' to Asian countries. From my personal view, I think they CJ E&M do invest a lot of money attract local viewers also by holdings such big events in Hong Kong or Singapore. I think they put a

high value on Chinese markets, Chinese viewers. That's why they hold such a big events in Hong Kong or Singapore. I think that is a MAMA event.

Julina: Oh. They call it MAMA event?

Dong: MAMA event. They take many famous singer and actors to Hong Kong or Singapore and they hold an award.

Julina: Yes awards. Okay. Is there any certain amount of money for promoting your programme in other country in a year? How much, it's not exactly how much, I mean how much amount do you spend to do some promotions? is there, a huge or is there any sponsorship from other to help..

Dong: To hold such a middle-size or big-size event, normally we do have to have a sponsorship from companies.

Julina: What company?

Dong: Because it costs a lot of money. So we need to have such sponsorship from whether they Korean companies in Malaysia or not. We do it, I think but I'm not quite familiar with such cash flow but I think that they need a sponsorship, I think mostly from Korean companies such as Samsung and LG and other Korean companies.

Julina: I can see that now that since the Korean drama is so popular in Malaysia, a lot of people now buying things like Samsung, LG, is there any connections between dramas and all the electric device?

Dong: Collision?

Julina: Is there any connection?

Dong: Connection?

Julina: Yeah, since the drama is popular everybody try to buying something from Samsung, they look to the LG and they look to the car, Hyundai. Isn't it? Right? Kia. Everybody said and talking about that.

Dong: I think it's common sense that if Korean company is to sponsor for such big events and then, we have to show their logos on the shows.

Julina: Oh. On the dramas and because I can see there a lots of, they only shows Korean cars, Korean hand phones and even if, cosmetics, even if the actors is using Volvo, they will put some black things there so that there is no logo Volvo in there. Why is it doing that? Why Korean doing that?

Dong: As far as I know we called it PPL, Product Placement. This is a kind of advertising. So, when you watch drama most of actors are using the same phone.

Julina: Yes

Dong: The Samsung or LG and that means such dramas are supported or sponsored by...

Julina: Oh. That means Samsung...

Dong: Supported and then, they also need to show the sponsorship in the drama. This program is supported or sponsored by the LG or Samsung. In South Korea, PPL is allowed by our regulatory. So, yes yes.

Julina: That means they are ready to help to sponsor you because indirectly they will get a promotion through the drama, isn't it?

Dong: If the products are shown in the drama then viewers can look to Samsung and LG. While they are watching the dramas, every actors using the same phone.

Julina: Yeah.

Dong: Viewers believe that..

Julina: That's the best.

Dong: That's the best. That's why they go to the store to look through the same phone. The same one they watched.

Julina: Yeah. That's what happened to me because I watched a lot drama and then I bought this one.

Dong: Galaxy Note.

Julina: Yeah. Haha. Because it looked lovely because they keep talking through, use this phone and then I said "that phone is so thin".

Dong: Personally, that's not a good idea because you know, realistically each and every person uses different phones but in the drama all the actors use the same phone. I don't think it makes sense. So, you know, for the quality of the drama I think there is not such desirable. I think.

Julina: Because you know when me and my husband watch the Korean drama and we saw they use this phone and they use the Korean cars and everything and we keep talking and we say is there any other product from other country to their country. We keep wondering, why are they not using other products? and then we come to sense that maybe this device something giving something to them. No wonder.

Dong: So PPL you know indirect advertising is allow in Korea. So you know actually drama, producing a Korea drama costs a lot of money. So, they do have some sponsorship from such companies and then, they do also put some PPL on their shows. So, that's the way we are producing the drama I think at the moment.

Julina: I once read an article is written by the professor, I forgot which university. He said that when that produce the Korea drama and try to sell it to overseas, intentionally is popular it's not, they don't know the future but they try but suddenly they also surprised that it's popular. Is it true?

Dong: I do not quite understand.

Julina: They said, when they produce the drama here. They tried to sell it overseas but they are also surprised that is popular in other countries, in Malaysia and in everything because they, is not something that they intentionally do it because they don't have confident for the first time and then suddenly, surprisingly, it's popular and demand keep coming. Is it true?

Dong: I think it depends on the taste, taste of their viewers to watch it that show. You know, there is a programme which is called 'Love Rain'. That programme also shows on KBS but as far as I know Love Rain is specifically made for Japanese viewers.

Julina: Oh. I see.

Dong: Because you know the unit price for selling such content is very high in Japan. You know, Japanese buyers pay a lot of money to such programme.

You know Jang-Keun Suk. Because Love Rain is made, was made specifically for Japanese viewers.

Julina: So, is there any sponsor from Japan?

Dong: No, I do not have such information but..

Julina: But the Japan asked Korean to do such drama, to produce for them?

Dong: No, Korean production company made Love Rain.

Julina: For Korean.. For Japanese..

Dong: Targeting for Japan and then, the show was aired on KBS but in Korea, Love Rain, the viewership, the rating for Love Rain is very low. But they can sell Love Rain to Japan at a high price.

Julina: Oh. I see. So that means before doing that drama they do some studies maybe about Japanese?

Dong: Sure, sure, they casting the actor who is very popular in Japan who is Jang-Keun Suk and then he is the main actor because Japanese viewers do like him and then they, the producer team casted Jang-Keun Suk as a main actor but the viewership, the rating in South Korea is not that good but when they sell such content to Japan they have lots of money.

Julina: Okay. So, what about Winter Sonata?

Dong: Winter Sonata is not originally, not targeting overseas countries but Winter Sonata was very popular in South Korea first and then, such news that Winter Sonata was very popular was just deliver to other viewers in the Asian countries and then, they acquired, they buy, they bought Winter Sonata and

put such content on their channel and then you know very popular because I think you know, value.

Julina: Yeah. Um. You are trying to say that some of the dramas is intentionally and some of them unintentionally?

Dong: But it depends on the taste on the viewers. If viewers do like such contents as Winter Sonata, they do enjoy but Winter Sonata is not was not made for overseas viewers at first but in South Korea the reputation and popular..

Julina: Maybe because that actors and actress so handsome and so beautiful pretty..

Dong: And then the storyline..

Julina: Yeah the storyline and so smooth and I once watch it and then, again I watched it. I just speaking with you, you know 'Autumn In My Heart'? The drama Autumn In My Heart.

Dong: Autumn In My Heart?

Julina: You know, I keep reading in articles saying that the dramas that most popular Dae Jang Geum, Winter Sonata and Autumn In My Heart. So I watched Winter Sonata and Dae Jang Geum is about 100 something episode and then Autumn In My Heart, I tried to watch it through internet and about midnight so I watched it for the first episode I really cried.

Dong: Autumn In My Heart?

Julina: Yes and then, my husband said "Why are you not sleeping?". I keep crying in front of the computer and then I said, " You have to watch this", and then..

Dong: I think you can share such values from your heart.

Julina: Yeah and then, I said why, how come Korea can touch my heart because I know my heart is not that you know not that emotional, I'm quite strong but however when I watch that drama I keep crying until the last episode. So I think that Korean has done something and Korean knows the feeling of Asian, how to touch our heart. That, I think that it's amazing.

Dong: The producer is very popular, the producer who is responsible for the making this programme but I don't think, he's, when he made such drama I don't think he is targeting Malaysian viewers or Singaporean viewers but I think they just put some values and then, they made a good storyline and then, show this programme in South Korea first and then most of viewers do like watching this programme and then, it spread to you know Asian viewers and then, some company bought this company and put it on their channel to local viewers and then, they also do like because that means I think storyline is important and then, you know if they put some values that we can share with Asian viewers. I think this a point where we can appeal to local viewers as well.

Julina: I mean Korean drama is not over acting. Is not over acting compare with western. Western sometimes they are over acting but Korean drama when they cry they don't have to make face look like ugly face. They just simply and the tears coming down. Makes you feel oh no. But when you watch Bollywood, watch Indonesian they try very hard to cry. That's why I think are you acting, are you, is this really you are feeling sad or acting. But Korea drama is never want do that, they just simply cry even when they eating you can drop the tears. It makes me feel aww, this is, this drama is really something. Surprisingly. Erm. Do you have any plan to, I mean in the future,

when the other countries like Japan, Bollywood, Hong Kong realized that Korean drama is so popular, are you planning to compete with this other countries' dramas?

Dong: Compete?

Julina: Yeah. Because I know and I've also read that there is a anti-Korean dramas in the internet saying that you don't have to watch Korean drama, sometimes they are, from other country and then it comes to me that to asking you are prepared or planning something to compete with them. Maybe one day, they will be your rival.

Dong: Compete with those who are..

Julina: From Japanese, from other countries. Compete with them.

Dong: I don't think so, we just doing our job, you know.

Julina: So you are not..

Dong: As you know, we just to make our programming and then from our part we select the appropriate dramas that we think are suitable for local viewers and that's it. We are doing our job. We do not care about whatever they say about Korean drama we just focusing on our production. If we keep doing this, then the viewers will do love to watch KBS dramas.

Julina: Um. Do you think in the future entertainment industries will be the biggest industries for the Korean income?

Dong: (Laughs) This is not the question I think I can answer.

Julina: Just your opinion.

Dong: I think I'm not the right person. Entertainment?

Julina: Because entertainment industries I think in Korea is so popular compare with other industries.

Dong: I think there is one condition that we do have a strong Korean Wave. Mostly in Asia countries. If such trends will sustain for the future then entertainment will be a largest, one of the largest industries in South Korea but nobody knows when the Korean Wave will decrease or increase. Nobody knows. But if we keep doing our job to make a good drama contents then we can keep such trend for such a long time but in that case entertainment including you now, variety shows, making TV contents will be a, will be the one of the largest industries I think. I don't know this is a right answer or no.

Julina: Yeah. This is the future. We never know. But when I speak to my supervisor from the university, she said, "I don't think Korean wave will stay for that long, I think maybe in 10 years, the Korean Wave will come to the end", she said. But I told her "I don't think so because I know, the Korean people keep doing a research, they keep studying what people like and what people don't like and they try to make something new" I said to her. But she said we'll see in another 10 years she said.

Dong: I think nobody can project, I mean predict exactly. When it comes to the quality for quantity of programmes that produces. I think South Korea is better than other countries compare to Hong Kong, Singapore or China or Taiwan. When it comes to quality in quantity. The reason why they import, they buy Korea drama contents is that they do not have such production capability. They just buy, not producing because Korean dramas are

excellent. They just buy it, also that means they do not have production capabilities but in 10 years time or 20 years time, they will learn and then, they do have some production capability in decade or two then they will produce an excellent drama, then Korean Wave will decrease I think but nobody knows.

Julina: Yeah. Nobody knows.

Dong: You can.. You need to do research why overseas companies do buy Korean content that is because we Korean do have a production capability but I mean high quality, producing high quality drama but you know, when I heard from Hong Kong, Hong Kong contents is not so good, isn't such good because Hong Kong viewers are tired of viewing their own content. You know TVB, Hong Kong Terrestrials and there is ATV as well but when I meet, met Hong Kong viewers in Hong Kong they told me that Hong Kong dramas are very boring. That's why they buy Korean dramas and variety shows. So we sell it but in 10 years or 20 years, if they acquire or if they learn how to make a good drama content and then, if they make such good excellent dramas then, Korean Wave, there is a chance that Korean Wave will decrease but at this stage.

Julina: Still safe.

Dong: Nobody know how it goes.

Julina: Okay. The last question is can you tell me the history how in the first place you can go out from Korea.

Dong: Hmm?

Julina: How in the first place is the Korean drama can, the history of Korean drama, the first Korean drama that go out from Korea?

Dong: How?

Julina: Yeah. How this, the first drama. How can go to, do you know the history? I read from a some article said, because when the economy down in 1997 or something like that and then the Hong Kong, Japanese drama was quite expensive. So, Malaysian or something like that country like us looking for the drama..

Dong: Cheaper?

Julina: The cheaper one, so they bought in from Korean because they are cheap and that time the Korean drama is so cheap and then, bring it to Malaysia and then, it suddenly it's booming in Malaysia, from that start moment they keep taking from Korean. Is that true?

Dong: Sorry, sorry, I..

Julina: And then now the Korean dramas is no more that price, the Korean drama is now higher than Japanese.

Dong: I think I need to look up how the first Korean drama sales were conducted. I think that's the deal between sellers and buyers but I do not know how it happened but I think mid 1990s..

Julina: When the economy down isn't it? Yeah.

Dong: I think the first moment is from Dae Jung Geum I think and Winter Sonata.

Julina: Winter Sonata is the first in Malaysia I think that's really booming.

Dong: I do not have the exact history how it happened.

Julina: And also in Malaysia, we have a store that is special for the Korean CDs.

Everybody comes to that store and buy, just to look for the new latest one that they buy it without thinking about..

Dong: If a company in Malaysia buy Korean drama, they have rights to make DVD, also they do have right to put the contents on the internet. It depends, there are many rights. If ASTRO can buy KBS drama, then they put the contents on their platform and if they internet and mobile company buy Korean drama, they can have right to put such contents on their mobile and internet platform.

Julina: Oh. That means when they buy Korean dramas, they can do anything with the drama.

Dong: Within the agreed rights.

Julina: Within oh. Okay.

Dong: There many different rights.

INTERVIEW ENDED